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1959

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for the Arts and Sciences*

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# Rip Van Winkle: A Psychoanalytic Note on the Story and Its Author\*

by

Marcel Heiman, M.D.#

"He that cuts off 20 years of life  
Cuts off so many years of fearing death."

William Shakespeare,  
Julius Caesar, III

"The past is beyond our control. The present  
is often out of control, but the future is com-  
pletely under the dominion of our fancy and  
he is a fool who does not fashion it into a  
perfect Eldorado."

Washington Irving,  
Notebook, 1818, at age 35.

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## CHRONOLOGICAL CHART

Year	W.I.'s Age	Important Events	Writings	Pseudonyms
1763		Family arrives in NYC		
1772		Rip's sleep begins (?)		
1783	Born NYC	Peace Treaty signed		
1792		Rip's sleep ends (?)		
1802	19	Meets Hoffmans, Mathilda, age 10	Letters	Jonathan Oldstyle
1804	21	First trip to Europe		
1806	23	Interest in Mathilda	Stories	Simeon Senex
1807	24	Father's death	Salmagundi	Evergreen
1809	26	Mathilda's death at age 17½ Depression	History of New York	Diedrich Knickerbocker
1815	32	Second trip to Europe		

1817	34	Mother's death. Bankruptcy. Depression			
1819	36			Sketchbook Rip Van Winkle	Geoffrey Crayon Diedrich Knickerbocker
1821	38	Brother William's death. W.I. falls ill			
1823	40	Meets Fosters. Emily, age 18 rejects marriage proposal. Dépression		Abu Hassan	Anonymous
1859	76 (dies)				

The story of Rip Van Winkle is part of the "Sketch-book" which Washington Irving published in 1819 when he was 36 years old. The nom de plume he used for these stories was "Geoffrey Crayon." It has been said that he selected this name because his writing was "pictorial." "Irving was always drawn to painters, his closest friends . . . and he had a real talent for drawing, as his sketches showed" (3) One of the severest criticisms which may be raised against the quality of Irving's writing is based on his lack of depth. Gliding pleasantly on the surface he shied away from the maelstrom of intense emotions. "He has a wonderful knack for shutting his eyes to the sinister side of anything." . . . . "All that was mean, or envious, or harsh, he seemed to turn from so completely that, when with him, it seemed that such things were not." . . . . "Nature in her sweetest or grandest moods, pervaded his whole imagination, and left no place for low or evil thoughts; " . . . (Observations made by Emily Foster on Irving, quoted in Warner (38).)

Irving's denial of passion and aggression can be noted in his writing as in his daily life. Aside from his early attempts at satire his writing is characterized by idyllic descriptions and biographies. By contrast, his few ventures into pure fiction are of special interest, and a greater degree of self-revelation can be expected. Rip Van Winkle is an example of this.

The story of Rip Van Winkle tells of a good-natured fellow who lives in a quiet hamlet inhabited by Dutch settlers in the Catskill Mountains. A poor provider for his family, Rip Van Winkle is always being scolded by his wife, Dame Van Winkle, who is a nagging, broom-wielding shrew. One day, Rip and his dog go off to the mountains to seek some relief from the tongue-lashings of this "virago."

In a ravine leading up to a natural amphitheatre, Rip meets a bearded little man, dressed in ancient habit and struggling with a keg of beer. He helps him carry it into the opening where a group of similarly attired men are solemnly playing ninepins, - the echoes of their clashing

balls reverberating along the mountainside like thunder. After helping himself to a few draughts from the keg, Rip falls fast asleep.

On awakening, he finds himself strangely stiff in the joints, his dog missing, and his hunting rifle gone to rust. Returning to the village, he is amazed to find everything changed. His wife is dead, all his friends are either gone or dead, and his country has won a revolution against the motherland. It seems that he has been asleep for twenty years and has come back an old man. His daughter, now grown and married and with a baby of her own, takes him home to live with her, and the story ends on a happy note, for Rip has finally found the peace and contentment he sought.

At the age of 34, while living in England where he had spent the past two years, Irving found himself in a deep depression. He had known depressed moods before in his life and had managed to fight them off. Two events had brought about this state of mind: One was the bankruptcy of his brother's business in which he was the silent partner; the other his mother's death.

Irving was very much attached to his mother and, being the youngest of her eleven children, was considered her favorite. All of her children recalled their mother as having been "infinitely kind," but Irving's love for her was "hallowed by the deepest reverence." When Irving was himself past 70 and his mother long since dead, he still dreamed of her and would wake up "with tears on his cheeks."

The news of her death came at a time when he was already deeply distressed over his bankruptcy and the subsequent proceedings, all of which he felt added humiliation to the financial ruin. While he took some consolation in the fact that his mother died ignorant of his latest misfortune, he was all too painfully aware that she had not lived to see him amount to anything.

This was the third time in his life his high hopes for financial security had been shattered, each occasion linked with the death of a person close to him. In 1807, when Irving

was 24 years of age, his father died while Irving was away prospecting for land in Montreal, — a speculation which he and his brothers hoped would bring them wealth. Two years later, (1809,) the death of his fiancée, Mathilda Hoffman, put an end to Irving's prospect of becoming a partner in her father's law firm. And now, while in England, again it was "cruel fate" to have his mother die just when his hopes of achieving financial success were smashed again, this time having been based on the fragile structure of speculation.

It was not only the bankruptcy which humiliated Irving. But now, at 34, came the bitter realization that he had always depended on others, especially his brothers, for material and emotional sustenance. The "affectionate concern" of his two older brothers was truly remarkable. Their attitude toward him has been vividly described as that of "a parent who cannot relinquish the guidance of his child," with the result that Irving was in constant fear of possible fraternal disapproval.

At this turning point in his life Irving had to make his most important decision. Should he again accept an offer of help from his oldest brother, and thereby remain indebted to him? Or should he choose the only alternative he saw before him, — to fall back on his writing — this time as a means of support rather than as a gentleman's hobby. Turning down his brother's offer, Irving decided to devote himself to writing. "Bondage is bondage," he wrote, "though it be that of the deepest love" (42, p. 171).

Then began his battle against grief and depression over his mother's death, against feelings of humiliation over the bankruptcy, against loneliness and insecurity and pangs of guilt that he had let his mother down. "I loved her with all the affection of a son, and one of my most poignant griefs was that her latter days should be embittered by my reverses" (42, p. 152). Last, but far from least, was his struggle for independence.

It was at this time that Irving set about writing what was to become an American classic. We shall see that it was not only as a result of his immediate life situation that Irving

created Rip Van Winkle. He used this story to find a solution for his particular oedipal and general neurotic conflicts. In this process, using a universal myth, he created an American legend.

As in the past, when wrestling with thoughts of death and feelings of depression he sought some interesting diversion. This time he decided to take up German, "bought a German grammar and fell to work. 'For months I studied German day and night by way of driving off horrid thoughts'." (42, p. 154) In his Notebook he indicates that in the course of studying the language he came upon collections of old German legends and so conceived the idea of Rip Van Winkle.

#### Washington Irving and Rip Van Winkle

The comparison between Rip Van Winkle and Washington Irving is inevitable. Irving is said to have imparted to the figure of Rip Van Winkle "his love of painting, his humor, his loneliness." "He too, to escape a way of life as irksome as Dame Van Winkle herself, might dream away the years; he too, an idler imprisoned in another realm, might return after decades only to find strange faces and the old order changed forever" (42, p. 184). "To state airily that Irving, depressed by his own isolation, was like the prodigal of the village, is to go too far" (42, p. 187)

It is my belief that this comparison does not go far enough. The fact remains that it is Irving who created the characterization of Rip Van Winkle. One need but compare Rip Van Winkle with Peter Klaus, his German counterpart. Like Rip, he too meets with enchantment, but in Peter's case there is no need to escape a nagging wife. Rip is richly and ingeniously characterized, while Peter is only depicted as a poor, simple goatherd.

It would be well to remember that since writing the Rip Van Winkle story was intended as a kind of economic catalyst for its author, it may well have been his means of taking a kind of poetical fling — something he no longer felt he could do in real life since he had decided to devote himself seriously to writing "for bread and cheese." In a sense, the story

represents Irving's wish to be carefree again, even as Rip Van Winkle.

Taken right out of Washington Irving's own life and virtually unchanged, we find in the story the "gay blades" of his younger years, the so-called "nine worthies." As Irving describes the group in the story, it was "a kind of perpetual club of the sages, philosophers and other idle personages of the village," which held rounds at the village inn. Throughout Irving's life is found the wish and perhaps the need to be in the company of men.

Another facet in the characterization of Rip Van Winkle is his sheer inability to attend to his own business, while always undertaking to help other men's wives with "those little odd jobs their less obliging husbands would not do for them." How like Irving himself, with his perpetual desire to help his married women friends as much as he could, but unable to handle his own affairs.

This inability to concentrate on any of his business is so very much Irving's own difficulty as we observe it all through his life. It started in school where he lacked interest in learning. It continued during his teens when he could not apply himself to study for the Bar. As he grew up "there was in the family circumstances no pressing need of his earning a living, and he was left to drift along in vague expectation of what might turn up" (41). He was charming and entertaining; he was supported by his brothers; and invited to parties in New York and other cities. In other words, he was a play boy. Irving himself was fully aware of his difficulty regarding his application to work. In a letter to Walter Scott he says, "I am unfitted for any periodically recurring task, any stipulated labor of mind or body. I have no command of my talents, such as they are, and have to watch the bearings of my mind as I would those of a weathercock. At present I am as useless for regular service as one of my own country Indians or a Don Cossack."

From the foregoing we may assume that in the figure of Rip Van Winkle, Irving is sketching himself; a kind and tender hearted man who is, apparently, not for this world.



### NICHOLAS VEDDER AND THE FATHER FIGURES IN WASHINGTON IRVING'S LIFE

One person in the story, Nicholas Vedder, is drawn with particular love and affection. He is singled out for special attention and his description leaves no doubt that to Irving he represents a paternal figure. He is described as "the patriarch of the village," the "landlord" of the inn, an "august personage." It is he who presides at the "Stamm-tisch" where Rip Van Winkle meets with the village philosophers. Vedder's importance is indicated not only by the position he holds in the village but also by the fact that he is the first man about whom Rip inquires upon his return.

With the name bestowed upon this figure Irving represented both himself and his father. The first name, Nicholas, is identified with Peter *Klaus*, the name borne by the main character in the German source of the Rip Van Winkle story. Since in our thinking, Rip Van Winkle represents the author himself, and Rip Van Winkle is the American counterpart of the German Peter Klaus, it would therefore seem that the figure of Nicholas Vedder represents both Washington Irving and his father. This idea would be further confirmed by the fact that Nicholas is the name of the Bishop, St. Nicholas (the Dutch Santa Claus) after whom the Festival of December 6th was named, a holiday popularly celebrated in colonial America (26).

Irving's pater familias does not cut a very sympathetic figure. Born in the Orkney Islands in Scotland, his father was a seaman until he settled in New York where he was to become an inconspicuous small business man. He was a stern and authoritarian church dignitary; a Deacon, who insisted on daily prayer meetings at which the entire family had to congregate. "He was oppressive to such an extent that, according to Irving, the Deacon led his children to believe all pleasures were wicked" (13, p. 6). He had no understanding for the fanciful flights of his youngest son's imagination, and Irving "eyed him indeed with fear, and at times with that distaste which a humane spirit feels for an alien nature" (43).

Irving hardly ever mentioned his father in his notes or letters, which led some of his biographers to the belief, in my opinion erroneous, that his father was not very important for him (a).

But one of the reasons his father's importance has been overlooked is to be found in the person of Irving's oldest brother who was 17 years older and named William, after his father. He was easy-going, a man of many talents, "a lover of languages and books - 'a man . . . of great wit, genius and originality'." (42, p. 15 & p. 75). William too had some literary ambitions but "having renounced his literary follies, had become eminent in both business and politics" (42, p. 133). What his father lacked in sympathy and understanding for Washington's complex nature, and what Washington lacked apparently in feeling for his father, was more than amply compensated by the relationship between these two brothers. He speaks of his brother William in words of deepest love calling him "A good son, a good father, a good brother and a good friend" (42, p. 23). In that literary document in which Irving reveals his soul the most, the "Manuscript Fragment," he says, "It is not two years since I lost my elder Brother - a man whom I loved better than any other man on the face of the earth - . . ." (43, p. 260) and later, "The Death of my Elder Brother, who was everything to the family . . ." (43, p. 261). It was William who protected his youngest brother from the harsh winds of life and supported him up to the time Irving was to write *Rip Van Winkle*. As Irving's father grew old, William had no difficulty taking his place. It was "the bondage" to William of which I spoke earlier, which Irving felt he had to break in order to regain his self-respect. Because it was William who took over the guidance of the family during the later years of Irving's life, throughout his life he was never

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(a) Hellman is Irving's only biographer who is aware of the importance of childhood experiences in the "biographical consideration" of the character structure. He states that "the preponderant influence of the Irving household was that of the father" (13, p. 6).

independent of the fear of paternal and fraternal disapproval (b).

We find no reaction in the 24 year old Washington to his father's death, yet of William's death the 38 year old Washington wrote that it "was 'one of the dismalest events' of his life; it rivalled the loss of Mathilda Hoffman" (of whom I will speak later). Irving "became ill himself, lying stretched on the living room sofa, his bothersome ankles the prey of numerous doctors" (42, p. 205).

I believe this family constellation may explain how Irving split up his ambivalence and applied the bitterness, hatred and antagonism to his father and the love to his oldest brother. This splitting up of the father image might be one reason why the importance of Irving's father was overlooked by his biographers. By analyzing some of Irving's literary work we find evidence for his wish to have father dead and for his identification with his father. As the story of Rip Van Winkle ends we read: "being arrived at that happy age when a man can be idle with impunity, he took his place once more on the bench at the inn door, and was revered as one of the patriarchs of the village" (23). The patriarch Nicholas Vedder is dead, and Rip finds himself in Vedder's place, a patriarch of the village (c).

Perhaps one of the richest but as yet untapped sources regarding Irving's preoccupation with his father is to be found in the various pseudonyms he used at various times of his life.

Irving's first stories, written at the age of 19 (1802)

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(b) There is an important coincidence in Irving's life which has been overlooked by his biographers. His father's death in 1807, when Irving was 24 years of age, preceded by two years the death of Mathilda Hoffman. The death of his brother William in 1821, when Irving was 38, preceded by two years his loss of Emily Foster when she rejected his marriage proposal.

(c) The observation has been made that Irving, having been named after the father of his country thereby had the opportunity to identify himself with the most important and most venerated personage of the country.

were under the pseudonym of "Jonathan Oldstyle, Gent." Irving calls him "a grumpy old critic on hoity-toity manners" (42, p. 36). Oldstyle is but another way of saying "oldtimer". Oldstyle also refers to the Julian calendar which was in use up to 1752 and his father was born under "o.s.". The next pen name ascribed to Irving, under which some magazine articles appeared in 1806 when he was 23, is Simeon Senex. Senex is Latin for "old man." One year later, the year when his father died, his pen name was "Evergreen."

Of course Irving's best known nom de plume is Diedrich Knickerbocker, under which he wrote "The History of New York," published in 1809, when he was 26. This name is important for the understanding of Irving's personality for many reasons, not the least of which is *that the story of Rip Van Winkle is ascribed by Irving to Diedrich Knickerbocker*. Yet, as part of the "Sketchbook," this story was not published until ten years later.

A great deal has been made of the fact that "The History of New York" was published shortly after Mathilda Hoffman, Irving's sweetheart, died in 1809. Actually, most of the work on this book was done after his father died in October 1807. I believe the death of Irving's father is as closely tied in with the figure of Diedrich Knickerbocker, as is the death of Irving's mother to the writing of Rip Van Winkle. The coincidence of events is almost uncanny. If my contention is correct that Irving's pen names, "Oldstyle" and "Senex" refer to his father, we may assume that the pseudonym Diedrich Knickerbocker also refers to his father.

Was it just coincidence that Irving let Diedrich Knickerbocker disappear, just as Rip Van Winkle had disappeared? This prefabricated advance publicity which Irving used to herald the publication of "The History of New York" has been described repeatedly, but has never been given its proper place in his life. The publicity stunt Irving concocted would do credit to a modern advertising agency. It appeared in the form of a newspaper item under the headline

"DISTRESSING." Then followed the item itself: "Left his lodgings some time since, and has not since been heard of, a small elderly gentleman, dressed in old black coat and cocked hat, by the name of KNICKERBOCKER. As there are some reasons for believing he is not entirely in his right mind, and as great anxiety is entertained about him, any information concerning him, left either at the Columbian Hotel, Mulberry Street, or at the office of this paper, will be thankfully received. P.S. - Printers of newspapers would be aiding the cause of humanity in giving an insertion to the above. - Oct. 25." (17).

I found confirmation of my assumption that Irving created Diedrich Knickerbocker with his father in mind when I checked the exact date of the above mentioned advertisement. It appeared on October 26, 1809, - exactly one day after the second anniversary of his father's death: — As is customary, obituaries appear one day after a person's death.

An additional explanation for Irving's replacing death with disappearance may be that Irving was away from home when his father died, as he was when his mother died. I believe this particular similarity was one of the unconscious reasons why Irving, who published *Rip Van Winkle* under the pen name of Geoffrey Crayon, ascribes it to Diedrich Knickerbocker in the "Sketchbook."

Why did Irving choose a Dutchman to represent his father? Actually, Irving was a man without a home, constantly in search of a home and family for himself. His father, a poor and inconspicuous immigrant, did not please him. While he looked upon the Dutch with a bit of amusement and an air of superiority, also reflected in the *Rip Van Winkle* story, nevertheless, they were the settlers from way back and had, at the time of Irving's youth, risen to the aristocracy of Old Manhattan.

In addition, Irving made the English his ancestors of choice, living in their country as a voluntary exile for a number of years.

In *Rip Van Winkle's* story, Irving brings the Dutch and

the English to a happy fusion through the figure of Henry Hudson. Irving calls him Hendrick Hudson, turning the man who was an Englishman by birth into a Dutchman, though it is true that Hudson made some of his voyages in the service of the Dutch East Indies Company. Irving, the first generation American son of an immigrant Scotsman, experiencing the unhappiness which thousands were to know after him, created his own father ideal: The Dutch at home and the English abroad.

Similar to Barbarossa who awakens every hundred years, Henry Hudson is said to return every twenty years to keep a vigilant eye on his domain. Thus, like Rip Van Winkle, Henry Hudson represents both, Washington Irving as well as his father.

I would like to note that "Hendrick" Hudson served Irving's purpose for another reason. Hudson, too, disappeared. He was put into a boat with his son (!) and was never seen again (6).

Washington Irving's humor is like the jesting of a clown. His pen smiles but his heart cries. At his best in the extravaganzas, he also reveals himself most. There is a connection between Diedrich Knickerbocker and his father, and between Diedrich Knickerbocker and Rip Van Winkle. Both Diedrich Knickerbocker and Rip Van Winkle represent a combination of Irving and his father.

Apparently Irving's biographers knew only the more conscious, superficial, negative aspects of his ambivalent attitude towards his father. This was present in his early writing which, for the most part is critical and sarcastic. But we can speculate about Irving's attachment to his father, about which nothing is known. It probably remained unknown even to Irving himself. Certainly he was very much aware of his wish to redeem himself in his mother's eyes. But perhaps his choice of Rip Van Winkle as a subject, following *her* death, was also an attempt to redeem himself in the eyes of his father.

Considered from this point of view, Washington Irving was a man divided within himself. He identified himself

with his father (as shown in his choice of pen names), and he was critical of his father. Either way, he wrote with his father in mind.

The biographical data preserved from the period before Irving wrote *Rip Van Winkle* indicate his depression and feelings of guilt. I believe that the death of Irving's mother not only mobilized his guilt feelings towards her but, in addition, reactivated ambivalent feelings towards his father. This speculation is corroborated by the fact that the *Rip Van Winkle* story is ascribed to Diedrich Knickerbocker, the pseudonym under which Irving wrote the "History of New York" following his father's death.

If in writing *Rip Van Winkle* Irving painted Nicholas Vedder with the soft brush of love; Dame Van Winkle was etched with the bitter acid of hatred. While in other parts of the story Irving closely followed the original Peter Klaus legend, Dame Van Winkel is wholly a product of his own imagination. Nor can we find, in Irving's own life, any woman who even vaguely resembles Dame Van Winkle.

Irving depicts this woman, who is the moving force of the story, in a way that leaves no room for doubt. In addition to calling her "a terrible virago," he refers to her as a "termagant wife." Termagant, now obsolete, means boisterous, turbulent and violent," adjectives which vividly describe Dame Van Winkle and her tongue. Constantly nagging her husband, she heaps verbal abuse on him until he can hardly bear it. Her weapon is her tongue, "the only edged tool that grows keener with constant use." "Her tongue, a butcher to his dreams" (10). So fearful is the spectre of this woman that even Rip's dog, "as courageous an animal as ever scoured the woods," was as henpecked as his master. Thus Washington Irving gives us a searing picture of a phallic woman, set in sharp contrast to the gentle sensitive portrait of *Rip Van Winkle*.

Dame Van Winkle, in her characterisation, symbolic representation, and in her mythological ancestress, is a fusion of both parental figures. As a person she is so strongly the opposite of Rip that the only place we can hope to find her



is within Washington Irving himself. The nagging, bitter tongue of Dame Van Winkle seems to be Irving's inner voice, constantly ringing in his ears to remind him of life's realities and responsibilities, always such grim sources of trouble for him. This severe, unconciliatory aspect of Dame Van Winkle, which I interpret as the voice of Washington Irving's superego, corresponds with the description we have of Irving's father.

While it is hypothetical whether Irving carried this pre-oedipal destructive mother image deeply repressed within him, consciously he certainly was engaged in a never ending search for the good mother.

#### **The Women in Washington Irving's Life**

One of the most interesting and certainly the most controversial area in Irving's life is his relationship to women. A bachelor all his life, I have found no evidence that he ever had sexual relations. Some of Irving's recent biographers believe that his nephew, Pierre Irving (entrusted by Irving to write an authorized biography, published about 80 years ago) "edited" certain data in his uncle's life, to make it appear that the youthful Irving's unhappy love affair with Mathilda Hoffman was responsible for his celibate life. As we may expect, matters are much more complex.

There were two girls and their mothers who played a significant role in Irving's life. One, Mathilda Hoffman, to whom he proposed marriage when he was 26; the other, Emily Foster, who rejected his proposal of marriage when he was 40.

About the first we have an exact autobiographical account of how he felt about her but no specific literary documents to assist our analytic interpretation. The other is a source of controversy among his biographers because no autobiographical accounts are available regarding his love and intent to marry. But in this instance a somewhat unknown literary work fills the gap. (Vide later Abu Hassan).

The story of Rip Van Winkle, written between these two episodes, contains a scene which I like to think is a clue to understanding Irving's relationship to these girls. This



scene is the recognition between Rip and his daughter upon his return and it represents the dramatic climax of the story. Perhaps it was a literary device, perhaps an expression of Irving's unconscious wish, nevertheless, prior to the recognition scene, Rip's daughter is never mentioned. The significance of the recognition scene cannot be overemphasized and it deserves particular attention. There are two aspects of the recognition scene which need to be considered: One, that it represents a repressed incest fantasy; and two, what the representation of such an incest fantasy between father and daughter meant to Washington Irving.

Otto Rank (31) accumulated ample evidence that a scene of recognition may be regarded as a means of avoiding sexual union. He gives a detailed account of how, after a separation, a meeting between a father and daughter, and the recognition between them, serve to make incest impossible. Incest is only possible if the daughter is not recognized (d).

When Rip Van Winkle meets his daughter, she has a baby in her arms — a little boy called Rip (e). Now there are three Rips on the scene: Rip himself, his son whom we see lazying about as Rip used to do, and his grandson: Representing morning, noon and evening in the riddle of the Sphinx (Oedipus).

The interpretation that Washington Irving identified himself with the infant Rip in his daughter's arms is in keep-

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(d) The danger of consummating the oedipal wish is clearly seen in another of Irving's "Sketchbook" stories, "The Widow and Her Son." Here the son returns and is *not* recognized by his mother, who has become a widow in the interim. "He saw her, and hastened towards her," reads the scene, "but his steps were faint and faltering; he sank on his knees before her and sobbed like a child. The poor woman gazed upon him with a vacant and wandering eye 'Oh, my dear, dear mother! Don't you know your son? Your poor boy, George?'" In a little while the son dies and shortly afterward so does the mother.

(e) Irving deviates significantly from the Peter Klaus story where Peter meets his daughter with "a year old baby in her arms, and a girl about four taking hold of her hand."

ng with the general thesis that the return from the sleep in the cave represents a rebirth fantasy. To be reborn and back with mother is another way of Irving's denying his mother's death. But this is only one aspect of his wish for union with mother. The other is that the recognition scene represents the expression of an oedipal fantasy, disguised by changing the man into an old man and into a baby as well.

Why did Irving choose the father-daughter situation to express his own oedipal fantasies? It is my contention that Irving identified both with the father and the daughter. We have already shown above the reasons for the assumption that the returned Rip Van Winkle is a representation of Irving's father. What reason do we have to assume that Irving identified with Rip Van Winkle's daughter? Let us now return to the first of the two episodes mentioned, his attachment to Mathilda Hoffman, prefaced by a brief account of Irving's life until then.

Washington was born the last of eleven children, his mother being 45 years old at the time. Starting from the age of 24, his mother gave birth every two years. His father was 52 when Washington Irving was born. Perhaps his mother, having given birth to so many children, was then entering her change of life.

We have no information about Irving's first few years other than that he was the darling of his sisters, brothers and mother. He does describe himself as being different from the rest of the family, who were "robust." He, on the other hand, was undersized and very sensitive, and, according to his own description, lived in a land of fantasy even as a little one.

"I had an impossible flow of spirit," he said, "that often went beyond my strength. Everything was fairyland to me." An unhappy child, he took to wandering away from home at a very early age. He would steal away from home and wander about the streets, down to the piers. At times he stayed away so late the town-crier had to look for him.

At the age of 6 he showed a tendency that was to become

characteristic. At that time it was customary for girls to be let out of school at an earlier hour than the boys, who were kept in school for their scheduled thrashings. In no uncertain terms, Irving expressed a desire to be dismissed from school with the girls.

Later, when he was in his early twenties, much of his time and interest was devoted to the Hoffman family. Irving's relationship with Mr. Hoffman, his second wife, and his daughter Mathilda serves as a paradigm for Irving's behavior. Hoffman, a lawyer, and later an important political figure in the city had, according to Irving, an affectionate and paternal regard for him. Mr. Hoffman seems to have been the answer to Irving's wishes. Unlike his own father, Mr. Hoffman was socially prominent and, again unlike his father, he did not seem to make too many demands on Irving.

At the time that Irving was virtually taken into the family, Hoffman had just remarried. Maria Fenno Hoffman was much younger than her husband and closer to Irving's age. An amiable, gentle and sympathetic woman, she was like a sister to Irving. He was in her company a great deal and it was upon her and not her husband that he felt he could rely and to whom he revealed himself in times of crises and depression.

Irving's "chivalrous" devotion had the full endorsement of Hoffman who entrusted his wife to Irving's care during his own absences. So chaste was Irving, so pure his relationship with Mrs. Hoffman, that he did not mind it when one of his drinking companions jokingly referred to her as Irving's "mistress" when she was expecting a baby. It so happened that Irving left for an overseas trip before the time for her delivery. In a letter to a friend he wrote, "My mistress is still growing in grace. Heaven grant her an accouchement as pleasant as the Virgin Mary's . . ."

Following his return from Europe, Irving falls in love with Mathilda, a girl of 14½. He is now 23 and still undecided about what to do, with no visible means of supporting a family. More than that, he is afraid of being shackled by marriage. The offer of a partnership by Mathilda's father

makes his dilemma still worse. If he buckles down and applies himself to the practice of law (he has managed to pass the Bar), he will be rewarded by financial security and the hand of Mathilda. But marrying Mathilda would mean losing the very home of which he has become a member. The love he bears Mathilda, who is 9 years his junior, has to be considered within the framework of his already established relations with Mr. Hoffman and his wife. Perhaps what Irving really wants is not so much Mathilda as it is Mathilda's place. Three years later, when she dies of consumption, his grief is deep and hardly bearable (f).

Now let's take a closer look at the situation. We see an unhappy wanderer who started to run away from home when he was little, at that time - around the block; later in his youth, - to the wilderness of Canada, and by the time he reached 21, on a journey to Europe. Finally he had found a home with the Hoffmans. At that time Mathilda was a mere child. Mr. Hoffman was everything he sought in his father, and the young, second Mrs. Hoffman just slightly older than Washington himself, was a companion to whom he could come with his sorrows. He never stopped admiring her gentleness and kindness, was always able to depend on her, in times of crises or in the depths of depression. She was the only one Irving could talk to after Mathilda died.

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(f) "I did not leave the house and scarcely slept . . . I cannot tell you what a horrid state of mind I was in for a long time - I seemed to care for nothing - the world was a blank for me - I abandoned all thoughts of the law - I went into the country, but could not bear solitude yet could not enjoy society — There was a dismal horror continually in my mind that made me fear to be alone — I had often to get up in the night and seek the bedroom of my brother, as if the having a human being by me would relieve me from the frightful gloom of my own thoughts" (43, p. 255).

There are two other notations, one following the other, from his Notebook of 1818. "I plunged into the gardens of the world but my heart went not with me. It lay silent and desolate. I listened not to its dictates. I scarce felt its questionings."

"Nature intended me for a husband, and an affectionate one. I have all the love of him which . . ." (Here the notation ends).

I suppose that Stanley Williams is right in some respects when he says he is sure that Irving did not love Mrs. Hoffman, if, by that, he means a physical, sexual love. But Irving's relationship to Mrs. Hoffman can only be understood after we realize that Irving desexualized women and delibidinized love and passion. Irving's love for women was the romantic love of adulation attributed to the knights of old. While he was not indifferent to women's charms, "his fervent and unsullied imagination arrayed them in celestial grace and endowed them with heavenly characteristics of mind, body and soul" (16).

Mrs. Hoffman, as I mentioned above, is his "mistress," but she is a "Mistress" with a capital M, a woman for whom he has such "chivalrous admiration", whom he placed on such a high romantic pinnacle (39) that the woman became void of human qualities. To Irving's complaint that his father's bigotry deprived him of the use of religion in times of need in later life, we may comment that he created his gods himself.

So we find Hoffman, his wife and Irving forming a sort of spiritual menage à trois. Irving is a real friend of the house, trusted by the master, devoted to the mistress, — enter now, Mathilda.

It is truly noteworthy how alike Irving and Mathilda were: In their appearance, sensitivity, shyness, interest in painting and literature and even with regard to the illness of which she died so quickly. (Apparently she died of galloping consumption. Before he fell in love with her, Irving went abroad because he was considered to have consumption). Through the rest of his life Irving carried the memory of his mother and Mathilda constantly in mind. Incidentally, Mathilda's first name was Sarah, as was the first name of his mother, a detail overlooked in Irving's biographies.

Irving's deep depression following Mathilda's death has been noted by all of his biographers. According to some he could not attach himself to another woman because of the love he carried for her. As we shall see, this was not quite true. Neither Irving's immediate nor long-lasting

reactions to Mathilda's death have ever been properly assessed. I believe that his depression following her death stems from a guilt over his unconscious wish to put himself in Mathilda's place. Only through Mathilda could he maintain himself in the Hoffman home, - without her he had no home. As I indicated earlier, what little information we have about his youth leads to the assumption of an early female identification. In the case of Mathilda, he identified himself with her out of a wish to take her place in the family.

This is the dilemma Irving was confronted with before Mathilda's death: He was accepted in a home where he found everything he desired but presumably he was not prepared to pay the price by marrying Mathilda. This situation might have mobilized his ambivalence very strongly. He loved her and wanted to be with her, — and he wished her dead and wished himself in her place. The only time Irving had pretty much everything the way he wanted it was before Mathilda's death when he had reached an understanding with her father: This "gentleman's agreement," that he would get Mathilda's hand as soon as he applied himself to the practice of law and became a partner in his law firm, forced him as well as allowed him to stay away from Mathilda physically.

After Mathilda's sudden death, his depression had many facets. He lost the home he built for himself; he lost the financial security he sought and was promised; he lost the girl he ambivalently loved and wished dead, and by associating Mathilda with his mother and identifying with her, Mathilda's death evoked intense guilt. And finally, there was through her death the resonance within Irving of his father's death two years earlier.

How, in his mind, Mathilda stood for his father and mother, is relevant to our understanding of Irving's state of mind before he wrote *Rip Van Winkle*. I have tried to show that the figure of Diedrich Knickerbocker represents Irving's identification with his father; and have interpreted the use he made of this figure for the writing of *Rip Van Winkle* as meaning that the death of his father was still

resonant in his mind at the time his mother died. At the same time, this very figure leads back to Mathilda's death.

There are occasions when, in scrutinizing biographical data, the eye of the psychoanalyst observes what might otherwise have gone unnoticed. In addition to the analyst's ability to connect data which are chronologically disparate, it is interesting to note that the analyst's perusal of diaries, letters and other biographical data, though they have been painstakingly examined by literary biographers, occasionally uncovers clues overlooked by the non-analytic researcher. This time it is a slip of the pen which is most revealing. In searching for letters Irving wrote following the death of his mother I came across one to his friend Henry Brevoort (g). The significant part is found in the way in which it is signed, "Yours sin. Washington Irving." This is obviously an abbreviation for "sincerely," a slip of the pen revealing his unconscious feeling of guilt.

In summarizing Irving's relationship to Mrs. Hoffman and Mathilda, we may interpret it as follows: Towards Mrs. Hoffman: unconsciously, a romantic, a-sexual regressed love; while consciously there was an intimate companionship, spiritually and intellectually. However, the main component

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(g) . . . . "I received some time since your kind letter urging my return - I have even come to the resolution to do so immediately but the news of my dear mother's death put an end to one strong inducement that was continually tugging at my heart, and other reasons have compelled me to relinquish the idea for the present. I have led a fitful, miserable kind of life for a long time past - now and then a little gleam of sunshine to rally up my spirits, but always sure to be followed by redoubled gloom. The cares and sorrows of the world seem thickening upon me and though I battle with them to the utmost and keep up a steady front, yet they would sometimes drag me down. However, I do not wish to trouble you with my complainings, and if I don't write to you often, believe me it is not for want of having you constantly in my thoughts, but because I have nothing pleasing to write about. Remember me affectionately to all such as take an interest in my welfare. God keep you my dear Brevoort and keep you prosperous and happy. Yours sin. Washington Irving." (12.



of this companionship was Irving's need to depend on Mrs. Hoffman emotionally.

With Mathilda there was a feeling of kinship of a physical, intellectual and emotional nature, facilitating his identification with her. His unconscious wish for a closeness with her father was satisfied by the acceptance he found in Mr. Hoffman's eyes. His wish to be a girl and to be loved by father was achieved through unconscious identification with Mathilda and, since the latter was associatively linked to his mother, Irving could be wife and daughter to his father.

I would like now to describe this other episode in Irving's life which involves the Foster family, - Mr. Foster, Mrs. Foster and Emily. Irving was 40 years of age, it was 14 years after Mathilda's death and 6 years after the death of his mother. The "Sketchbook" and other works had been published. He had remained in England and the continent and was regarded as America's leading literary figure. A little anecdote will illustrate Irving's fame at that time. An English lady and her daughter went to a museum where they saw a bust of George Washington. The daughter asked, "Who is this, mother?" and the reply was, "Washington." To this the daughter replied, "Is he the man who wrote the 'Sketchbook'?"

Irving met the Fosters in Dresden in 1840<sup>2</sup>. So much were they an exact replica of the Hoffman family, and so much was Irving's relationship to this family a repetition of what had happened earlier in his life that Williams (42, p. 237), noting this similarity, says, "It was now the Fosters who ministered to his need." Now Irving thought of Mrs. Foster as "the most good-natured woman in the world" (42, p. 238), spoke of her as a woman of gracious manner and culture, endowed with the gift of sympathy . . . "The growth and strength of Irving's intimacy with her is beyond question" (42, p. 252). As Williams also noted, Irving was at this time "envious of all who enjoyed the blessings of wife and child." (42, p. 237). Irving's journals give us an accurate account of his interest in Mrs. Foster and while he faithfully records his daily visits to their home, for weeks



we find no entry regarding Emily, who is almost 20 years his junior. We know that he proposed to her though we have no knowledge of any courtship preceding the proposal. The rejection of this proposal plunged Irving into a long period of melancholy similar to those after the deaths of Mathilda and his mother. Again he had lost a girl and a home.

Having studied the "reality" of Washington Irving's life before he wrote *Rip Van Winkle*, I investigated this similar period (after the Emily episode) in his life. By studying a barely known piece of writing of that time, I was able to corroborate my earlier impressions more fully than I had dared hope. During the time he was growing fonder of Mrs. Foster and made his perfunctory proposal to Emily, Irving created "*Abu Hassan*," which remained unpublished until 1924. Like *Rip Van Winkle*, so "*Abu Hassan*" is in part an adaptation, in part a translation. Another similarity is that "*Abu Hassan*" is based on legendary material and, significantly, it too deals with enchanted sleep. It is based on the story of the 271st night of Scheherazade's "*Thousand and One Nights*" called "*Abut Hassan, the Wag, or The Sleeper Awakened*" (h.) The German libretto of Weber's opera "*Abu Hassan*" which Irving translated and adapted is the latter part of Scheherazade's story. What precedes it is interesting enough in the light of what we have learned of Washington Irving to bear recounting here.

*Abu Hassan* was a young man who inherited a great amount of money upon his father's death. Investing one half, he spends the rest carousing with friends. After he has gone through this money he finds that his friends have turned from him. He decides to spend the other half of his money on "one night stands;" inviting a stranger for one night's festivity, never to see him once he departs in the morning (i). Thus he entertains the disguised Caliph, Harun

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(h) Since Scheherazade bore King Schahriar three sons during the time she entertained him with her stories, she must have been near her first confinement at that time.

Al Raschid, whom he has not recognized. The latter, to play a trick on Abu Hassan, and "in order to requite his host's generosity makes Abu Hassan unconscious with hashish and has him conveyed to the palace where, on awakening he was addressed by all attendants of the Court as Harun al Raschid." (11) The trick works and Abu Hassan believes himself to be the Caliph. As night falls he is again drugged and returned home. Unable to distinguish whether his experience was real or imagined, he deludes himself into acting as if he were the Caliph, and is taken to an insane asylum. The treatment there, appropriately consisting of daily lashings, is successful and Abu Hassan accepts reality. As a reward the Caliph gives him his wife's most beautiful attendant in marriage and Abu Hassan becomes the Caliph's daily visitor and trusted friend.

In this part of the story we find the exact situation Irving sought in his own life, in the Hoffman and Foster families. It is the rest of this story that was made into the play which Irving adapted. We see Abu Hassan and his wife continuing the extravagant carousing. Seeking a way to pay his creditors he promulgates a hoax on the Caliph in revenge for the latter's trick and in order to get some needed money. He suggests to his wife that he and she will alternate in feigning death. Each will then go to the Caliph and collect condolence money, as was then the custom. The trick worked, they collect money, are discovered by the Caliph, are forgiven, and the play ends with Abu Hassan's speaking lines which seem in essence to be Irving's own unconscious wish: "Am I not the shrewdest of all dead men? The simple folks let themselves be laid upon their bier without any future object; but I knew well what I was about — I had not the slightest inclination to remain dead, but only died — to gain a living!"

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(i) We recognize here the original idea of "Thousand and One Nights." To avenge himself on his infidel wife, King Schahriar consorts with a virgin each night for three years, only to slay her when morning comes.

With these final lines Irving says explicitly what is said implicitly in *Rip Van Winkle*. Our interpretation of Irving's use of the "sleeper" theme in the *Rip Van Winkle* story seems to be confirmed in finding a similar "sleeper" motif utilized following his disappointment with Emily Foster.

The proposed marriage of Washington and Emily was "staged," like the deaths of Abu Hassan and his wife. The characterization of Abu Hassan might have appealed to the "play-boy" Irving who always tried to find some way of being taken care of.

Scherazade's story in which, with the help of hashish, young Abu Hassan is put to sleep and then awakens to believe he is the Caliph sounds like one of Irving's own wishes as we have reconstructed them in connection with the *Rip Van Winkle* story. It is remarkably parallel to Rip's return to become the patriarch in place of the dead Nicholas Vedder, and we remember Irving's use of pseudonyms, particularly that of Diedrich Knickerbocker.

There is additional confirmation in Irving's *Notebook* of 1818 (the year following the death of his mother and prior to his writing *Rip Van Winkle*). Here he reveals a day-dream, - putting himself in the place of the president. "In the winter go to Washington . . . see the president at the levee. My expectation of him a great man - my surprise in finding him a small one - talk with him - declaim - advice . . . . what I would do if president . . . . When I leave the president I pronounce him a most agreeable man in conversation - what did he say? When I come to reply find that I had talked entirely myself" (22).

We do have some autobiographically documented information of an experience in the Fosters' home which seems to enter dynamically into the choice of the Abu Hassan story. One evening Irving and the Fosters put on an amateur play called "Three Weeks After Marriage" in which Irving and Emily played man and wife. Possibly the play-acting of being man and wife triggered Irving's imagination and again set in motion the wishes and hopes which had been buried when Mathilda Hoffman was laid to rest. Be-

ing married for one night, in a play, provides the same compromise between the fears (castration anxiety) and the wishes (oedipal wishes) we see in the gory specter of King Schahriar. King Schahriar is disappointed with women and avoids a repetition by killing his bride each morning after consummation. Abu Hassan does pretty much the same with men in a sublimated fashion. In one instance marriage is associated with death; in the other, friendship leads to loss of money and loss of sanity. Play-acting (in addition to fantasizing) might be one way to avoid guilt and punishment of his oedipal wish (j).

Abu Hassan was Irving's first attempt at a play although he had been a devotee of the theatre ever since he was a boy. He would sneak out of the house, go to the theatre, run back to be present at the family prayer meetings, and then go to his room, leave through the window and return to the theatre. His first pieces of writing, when he was 19, under the pen name of Jonathan Oldstyle, were letters in which he expressed criticism about current conditions in the theatre. During his travels in America and Europe he never missed any opportunity to see every possible per-

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(j) In checking the exact chronology of playing man and wife with Emily, of the marriage proposal, and of starting his work on Abu Hassan, I found the following data (22) (13):

Irving's association with the Foster family began on December 19, 1822. The play took place at the beginning of March, 1823. Until this time there is only one note on Emily. In March Emily refused his first proposal. After this, references to her become more frequent. His work on Abu Hassan started on April 20th. His self-revelation to Mrs. Foster, through the Manuscript Fragment, was probably in May. The final rejection of the proposal and the ending of the work on Abu Hassan was probably around May 18th and 19th, and on the 20th Irving left on a trip to the Silesian Mountains, apparently in order to get away from the Foster family. From this trip his letters refer only to Mrs. Foster, none to Emily. Thus the sequence is: interest in Mrs. Foster; rehearsal of play, and play; interest in Emily; rejection; work on Abu Hassan; marriage proposal; rejection; completion of Abu Hassan. (Hellman's "Biography of Washington Irving" has been used extensively for the Abu Hassan incident).

formance and prided himself on having seen every important actor and actress.

Irving's writing of Abu Hassan provides an important link in our understanding of Irving's reaction following Mathilda Hoffman's death and the death of his mother. It gives us an additional glimpse into the world of Irving's fantasy. The assumption regarding his ambivalence towards Mathilda in which he wished to marry her and wished her dead, finds support in the first scene of his Abu Hassan play. "Now make up your mind on the spot to die; and you will make me the happiest of husbands, . . . ." Another assumption of ours was that he wished to provide for himself financial security through marriage, an idea which Irving strenuously objected to consciously. Abu Hassan says to his wife when she informs him that there are persons who are ready to lay all their wealth at her feet. "Golden Fatima! What! Will anyone lay his wealth at thy feet? Let him - I beseech you, let him, my girl. By the head of the prophet I swear to thee it shall not be there long. But speak, who is the scoundrel that would make you untrue to me - and the fine fellow that would pay thy untruth so royally?" (18).

We find here the idea of gaining material advantage through marriage, through the death of his wife, and by his wife selling her favors. However, perhaps most important is an indication of Irving's idea, conscious or unconscious, to use his own death as a means of aggression. I have been unable to find further documentary confirmation than stated earlier that as a little boy Irving ran away from home, probably more than once. We may postulate that Irving fantasied his running away as a means of expressing his aggression toward his father. "I'll run away and you'll be sorry." This is literally carried out in Abu Hassan, where the money is extracted from a father figure precisely out of such motivations.

#### Interpretation

Someone once told Irving "His most comical pieces have always a serious end in view." Irving answered, "It

is true. I have kept that to myself hitherto, but that man has found me out" (40).

This certainly holds true for Rip Van Winkle, which seemed less funny the more I understood it. Before Irving wrote this story he was not only in a serious mood, he was deeply depressed, lonely, plagued by self-reproaches, guilty and feeling beholden to his brother. His self-esteem was at its lowest ebb. With the writing of Rip Van Winkle (and the "Sketchbook"), most of this changed, at least temporarily.

It is true that one of the immediate results of the publication of Rip Van Winkle was literary success and financial independence. However, the independence which Irving sought was not only financial; he sought freedom from his ambivalent conflict towards father and mother. In the story, while Rip sleeps, death takes over the representatives of both of his ambivalent love objects. Looking at Rip we do not find the very reaction which Irving showed following the death of an ambivalent object. Irving never felt happy and free following the death of a person close to him. He felt depressed and guilty. But we do find in the story aggression which Irving was never able to express, - it is displaced from the individuals to the nation. The freedom and independence from England which America enjoyed upon Rip's return was brought about by force of arms. Even if Irving was not conscious of this, he certainly described only too well that independence can only be gained through forceful assertion.

Day dreamer Irving was. He had learned in former years, by bitter experience, that in order to escape depressed moods he had to turn from the passivity of fantasizing to the activity of writing. The act of writing contains within it creativity and aggression. The process of creation may be viewed too as an attempt to replace the lost ambivalent object. Specifically, that which is being created, in this instance the story, takes the place of the lost object. To Henry Brevoort, who helped Irving with the publication of the "Sketchbook" in America, Irving wrote thus: "There is



something delightful to me in the idea that you in a manner stand go-father to all my children; I feel as if it were a new tie that binds us together" (12).

Through the creative process ideas become cathected and are externalized, in the direction of the anticipated audience. But at the same time - and therein might lie one of the therapeutic factors of the creative process - the ego frees itself from being the object of the aggressive impulse (since the ego has become the object of the aggression after the ambivalent love object has been lost). There are elements of sublimation in this compromise which turn the aggression away from the introjected image, away from the self, and toward what is being created, which, to repeat, is the replacement for the lost object. Since the destructive impulse is directed towards creation, we arrive at the formulation that creation is destruction, which has been expressed by Friedrich Hebbel, "Die Darstellung toetet das Darzustellende" (32, p. 86).

During his lifetime Irving sought to cope with the forces within him chiefly by neutralizing aggression and by desexualizing libido. He tried many times to silence the dictates of his heart, but was never able to find for himself a solution such as he provided for Rip in the story. Through the "sleeper" motif Irving satisfied some of his own unconscious wishes and at the same time escaped the intolerable reality situation. The "sleeper" motif is an exercise in the use of regression. (Vide Literary and Legendary Sources later.)

Through the "sleeper" motif Irving attempts to cope with his castration and separation anxiety. Death is denied and changed into sleep, the loss of the person is denied and changed into disappearance. The disappeared person is able to return, the sleeping one to awake: Thus the finality of death is magically altered through resurrection. This has special significance for Irving if we remember that we have seen how he ran away from home as a child; how father, mother and his oldest brother died while he was away from home, how he reenacted the death of his father by changing

death into the disappearance of Diedrich Knickerbocker. The idea of denial is supported by the description of how Irving made "a shrine out of Mathilda's death, never forgetting her." This amounts to keeping her alive, using the person whose death he witnessed to fortify his denial of the death of those when he was absent.

In the "sleeper" motif, the cave is a symbolic description of the geography of the female genital (29). The return to the cave, to mother, is important to Irving in several ways. His use of this motif is an expression of Irving's wish to be dead, of his wish to be united with mother oedipally and pre-oedipally thus coping with his castration anxiety and his separation anxiety, and it contains his wish for homosexual union with father via his identification with mother.

Through the story of Rip Van Winkle Irving deals variously with his wish for possession of his mother. His wish is achieved symbolically (by entering the earth), through regression (by identification with the baby Rip), by accepting castration (masochistic defence, - being old and impotent), and identification with his father (upon his return Rip finds the father figure, Nicholas Vedder dead, and he himself becomes "reverenced as one of the patriarchs").

We have documented, amply, Irving's depression and wish to die. I wonder whether perhaps Irving did not kill himself but went on suffering because he felt he had to live to expiate his guilt. All his life Irving had been deeply troubled by separation anxiety. We read that following the death of Mathilda Hoffman he would wake at night and go to his brother's bed because he needed to feel the nearness of another person. The separation from his mother which began at birth was actively reenacted by Irving by his wanderings away from home, his living away from home, his travels abroad. It found its completion by mother's death. For Rank, "the final solution which we above all desired is the return to the womb whence we came, that is, everything we seek, from the love of the normal man to the suicide of the melancholic is a substitute for this situation" (31). If Irving's unconscious wish was to return to the very



place from which he was born through death; his conscious thought, as found in one of his diaries (20) was, "There is but one way of coming into the world, but ten thousand of going out." So much is the wish to return to the prenatal state associated with the incest wish, that Money-Kyrle is right in asking "whether the desire for incest, . . . is a symbol of a desire to return to the prenatal state, or whether . . . (the latter) is a symbolic incest" (28).

Irving gives some evidence in the story that the wish to return to the womb, or to be united with mother as a baby, expresses the desire for incest on a regressed level. However, even the symbolic realization of the incestual wish is followed by castration which has been feared. Only through regression during sleep or through the "sleeper" motif may Irving enter the place whence he had come. When upon awakening Rip tries to find his way back to the cave, "the scene of last evening's gambol," . . . "where the ravine had opened through the cliffs, no traces of such opening remained. The rocks represented an impenetrable (!) wall, over which the torrent came tumbling down." Regression was the magic sesame by which he entered the mother's genitals. Death is the punishment for the incest wish, as Irving pointed out in a postscript to *Rip Van Winkle*.

The punishment for the incest wish is death and/or castration. Rip enters the cave potent. He leaves it an old man, impotent, "with his fowling piece rusty." Rip is an old man and thus has paid the penalty for his incest wish, and at the same time we find baby Rip in the arms of his mother, the compromise for his wish to return to his mother's womb. (Similar to the resurrection theme in the "sleeper" legends).

Just as Irving wished to deny his mother's death and be united with her, so does he have a similar wish about his father. The cave represents the resting ground of Irving's forefathers, since, as I have indicated, Hendrick Hudson, whom he finds there, represents Irving's father ideal. The total silence in which the little men play nine-pins tells us that they are dead, but at the same time, like Barbarossa, not

dead for good. This "awe-inspiring" visit to his forefathers has its counterpart in Irving's real life journey to England, of which he wrote in his introduction to the "Sketchbook". "I shall visit this land of wonders, and see the gigantic race from which I degenerated." The playing of nine-pins is the symbolic representation of a primal scene fantasy of which Rip is a witness and of which Irving becomes a participant through identification with mother (k). Irving's wish for sexual union with his father is described in the story, additionally, through identification with Rip's daughter who takes the returned father into her home.

Later, as we trace the parental figures of the story into the past, we will see that a fusion occurred between the mother and father figures, similar to an undifferentiated pre-oedipal parental image. This fused paternal and maternal figure of mythology represents both fierceness and fertility. The personage of fierceness and fertility is the mythological representative of aggression and libido and can be viewed as a projection of these instinctual forces into the outside world. We can recognize in this idea a forerunner of the dual instinct theory of Freud.

This evaluation of Washington Irving supports some of the ideas Hitschman has expressed (15). We have found a "conflict between male and female principles" within him and that he himself compared productivity with child-birth. We have seen Irving's propensity for day-dreaming; how he remained unmarried; and have recognized his father as the most important person in his life. Irving's ambivalence toward his father, his search for a better father, makes the death of his father one of the most important events in his life.

Irving, who for so long used fantasies to escape reality,

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(k) Rip Van Winkle's twenty year sleep from which he awakens old and impotent and at the same time a baby, has an interesting corollary in the fact that Irving was born in New York City exactly twenty years after his father had arrived there from England.

finally found in his writing a reality by which he escaped his fantasies.

### Literary and Legendary Sources

This story is an adaptation of the German legend, "Peter Klaus the Goatherd." Irving not only used the motif of this legend but actually borrowed whole sentences. When confronted with this fact later, he blandly admitted it. Unashamedly he stated that such legends are the property of the whole world.

The most comprehensive of Irving's recent biographers, Stanley Williams, assumes that Irving became acquainted with Peter Klaus and other legends related to the Kyffhauser Mountains and King Barbarossa through a collection by a man who wrote under the name of Otmar. I have been unable to find the original collection (published in Bremen, 1800), but have found an English translation published 26 years later (33) (1).

An interesting item of literary detection is the search for the first person who definitely recognized the German source of Rip Van Winkle. Stanley Williams (42) credits J. B. Thompson, in 1883. John T. Krumpelmann (25) points out that Bayard Taylor was the first person who definitely stated the German nature and source of Rip Van Winkle, in 1868. I believe that the first one to recognize Peter Klaus

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(1) The second of Roscoe's four volumes contains "The Popular Traditions Collected and Narrated by Otmar." (33). The legends referring to the Kyffhauser Mts. are introduced by a translation of Otmar's preface which bears quoting here: "The Kyffhausen or Kipphausen Mounts command a view of the Brocken, . . . It takes its name from the old castle, which still excites our wonder amidst its ruins. It is called Kyffhaus, a word which without doubt was equivalent to the Germanice, Streiten, Zanken, which has also been turned into Keifen - Ot."

Otmar's derivation of Kyffhauser is supported by the most reliable source on this subject, the Grimm Brothers (8) who state, "all words with 'Kyff' refer to 'keif' and 'kif'." This permits an etymological connection between Irving's "termagant" and Kyffhauser. Cassell (5) translates termagant as "Zankteufel," or "Hausdrache," expressions which cannot be literally translated into English.

as Rip Van Winkle's German source was Thomas Roscoe (33) who published his translation in 1826 (m).

In a postscript to Rip Van Winkle, Washington Irving acknowledges the source of the story in his very own way; that is, by denying such a connection. In a tongue in cheek postscript ascribing the story to the pen of Diedrich Knickerbocker (a pseudonym Washington Irving had used earlier) he says that since Mr. Diedrich Knickerbocker has met and talked with Rip Van Winkle himself, this story is thereby authenticated. As if one imaginary character meeting another imaginary character could make for reality! (n)

We have already compared our story with its German counterpart. It is of some interest to compare the names of the two main characters in the German and American stories: Peter Klaus and Rip Van Winkle. "Klaus," "Klause," means cave or hole. "Winkle" literally means corner, but in Yiddish is commonly used for "hole." And in the story we again meet the name Klaus in the person of Nicholas Vedder.

Before Irving began reading German and made his acquaintance with these legends, he had paid a visit to Sir Walter Scott. Scott told Irving the saga of Thomas of Erildoune, a set of legends in which the sexual motif is rather open. There are two stories in which Thomas the Rhymer

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(m) In a postscript to the translation of the legend (as it was recorded by Otmar) Roscoe writes: "In this very popular German tradition, the reader will easily recognize the Original of Mr. Washington Irving's most pleasing production, Ripp Van Winkle, which however, it may be added, contains much additional cleverness and amusement. - Ed."

(n) As an "aside" I would like to call attention here to the many pseudonyms connected with the Rip Van Winkle story. Washington Irving wrote the story under the nom de plume of Geoffrey Crayon but ascribed it to Diedrich Knickerbocker, an earlier pen name. "Otmar" (see footnote m) is a pseudonym for John Conrad Cristoph Nachtigal, 1753-1819, well regarded because of his translations of psalms. I would guess that he used this pseudonym because of a namesake, Oscar Nachtigall, 1487-1537, who translated psalms from Hebrew into German.

is involved. In one, the Fairy Queen lures him into a mountain ravine where she keeps him for seven years. The other story takes place in Inverness, at Tom-na-Huriche, the Hille of the Fairies (which Irving may himself have visited at that time). In this story Thomas the Rhymer lures two fiddlers into a long passageway leading into a hillside. They return the next morning to find they have really been gone a hundred years. There are two other stories with which Irving most probably was acquainted since they too appear in Otmar's (33) collection. Both are legendary accounts of visits paid to King Frederick Barbarossa in the Kyffhauser Mountains. The first story tells of two young people who want to marry. They find they have no china for their wedding dinner and go into the mountain to ask for some. They were not seen again for 200 years. The second story (apparently another version of the first) tells of a poor laborer and his daughter. Just before the daughter's wedding they went into the mountain to ask for dishes, and they disappeared for two hundred years (36).

Legends about St. Nicholas are strikingly similar to those connected with King Barbarossa. For example, St. Nicholas tossed gold into a house to provide three daughters with dowries, and some of the dowry stories connected with Barbarossa.

In the early days, St. Nicholas, dressed in a Bishop's robe and with a mitre, was accompanied by a representative of hell, — the devil, — who was dressed in black and red, had horns and a tail, and carried a switch. He was called "Krampus" and while St. Nicholas bestowed gifts upon those who were good, Krampus beat those who were bad. The celebration of the Feast of St. Nicholas (26) is apparently an old custom originally observed on Martinmas (November 11th) at which fertility ceremonies such as the slaughter of cattle before the winter tree, occurred.

In the second Thomas the Rhymer story we find a homosexual motif. In the second of the Kyffhauser stories, we find an incest motif.

There is a whole group of "sleeper" legends with this

common theme of disappearing into a cave and reappearing after many years. They can be found in every era, in every part of the world. Of this whole literature of "sleeper" legends I can here mention but a very few.

There is the tale of the skeptical and selfish Chone Hamagel in the Talmud (37). He, seeing a man plant a St. John's Bread tree, which does not bear for 70 years, fell asleep and awoke when the tree began to bear.

Louis Ginzberg (7) recounts the legend of Ebed Melech. To spare him the sight of Israel's misfortune, the destruction of the Temple, God performed a miracle. Ebed Melech was before the gates of the city with a basket of figs when he fell asleep for 66 years, — and when he awoke his figs were still fresh.

What is considered one of the oldest "sleeper" legends, is difficult to trace: There were seven young Christians who, persecuted, found refuge in a cave in which they spent 200 years, then they emerged, — hale and hearty!

Among most of the older cultures we can find cognates of King Frederick Barbarossa in Kyffhauser and King Charles in Untersberg, — heroes asleep in mountains. In some of the hero-sleeper legends the hero sleeps during the Fall and Winter months, a more direct reference to the seasonal changes.

Another group of such legends deals not so much with hiding and waiting as with the search for sensual pleasure. One example is the myth about Endymion who "was granted by Jove the boon of perpetual sleep" (1). Endymion reposed in a cave where he met Selene the moon goddess who bore him 50 daughters. This rather enviable enterprise has been interpreted as Endymion, representing the sun, producing the weeks of the year with the moon. Other legends do not so unabashedly describe the pleasures as sexual. There is the story of a monk, Felix, who followed a singing bird and experienced the pleasures of paradise. He returned after one hundred years (24). Of course we are all familiar with the adventures of Tannhauser. He enters the Venusberg

and surrenders himself to sexual pleasure with none other than Frau Holde (vide p. 60).

All these tales have one theme in common: a person falls asleep for a period of years. Another characteristic aspect of the sleeper legends is that the sleeping usually takes place inside of a mountain or in a kind of cave. In some instances, the sleeper is enchanted into the cave by the promise of some sensual pleasure having to do with hearing, seeing or drinking. From this combination of sleeping, cave and sensual pleasure, it is not too difficult to assume that at least part of these legends are concerned with sexual pleasure, but made possible only through regression. Since the experiences of the sleepers have a dreamlike quality, they may very well be dreams representing wish-fulfillments, but distorted by the dictates of censorship. (This makes the myth a universal dream, and the dream an individual myth (32).

Various meanings have been ascribed to the number seven which is prominent in the "sleeper" stories. Most probably this number relates to the winter months and hibernation. Thus, in addition to their sexual quality, the "sleeper" legends are filled with ideas of birth and rebirth.

Next to the effect of the sun's disappearance each night, the onset of winter must have been most anxiety-provoking in primitive peoples. Presumably they thought the gods of flowers and plants hid underground when winter came to reappear in the spring. By the same token, the sleeper legends make the thought of death more bearable by modifying its finality and changing it into a long sleep from which a return is possible.

I believe we can learn much about Irving's difficulties with women if we understand the underlying significance of Dame Van Winkle. We can trace this figure way back into antiquity. Irving himself gives us a clue in the postscript to *Rip Van Winkle* wherein he tells of the Catskill Mountain Indians who are ruled by an Old Squaw Spirit, "said to be their mother."

This mountain spirit squaw is described as the goddess



of weather, ruling over the clouds. "If displeased . . . she would brew up clouds black as ink, sitting in the midst of them like a bottle-bellied spider in the midst of its web; and when these clouds broke, woe betide the valleys!"

There is another legend Irving cites in the postscript to *Rip Van Winkle*: This mountain spirit ruled the hunting seasons. Once a hunter saw a number of gourds in the crotches of some trees in a place considered to be inhabited by this female Manitou. When the hunter seized one of the gourds and dropped it, "a great stream gushed forth, which washed him away and swept him down precipices, where he was dashed to pieces."

I believe that the most important clue to the meaning of Dame Van Winkle, etymologically and dynamically, lies in the word "termagant" which Irving applied to her. W. W. Skeat (34) has an interesting note as to the source of this expression. "The word termagant comes from the Latin word 'trivagante,' meaning 'thrice wandering!'" "It has been suggested that Trivagante . . . is the moon, wandering under the three names of Selene (Luna) in Heaven, Artemis (Diana) on earth, and Persephone (Proserpine) in the lower world." Termagant, too, was one of the idols worshipped in medieval romances, presented as being of violent character. In addition, termagant not only connects with Persephone, it has an interesting legendary and etymological association with the Kyffhauser Mountains. The etymological connection has been mentioned earlier (footnote 1).

The legendary forerunner of Dame Van Winkle is a figure with whom Irving became acquainted in his early travels to Tarrytown and whom we met in the Kyffhauser Mountains and in such unexpected places as the Venusberg, namely Frau Holle or Frau Holde.

Visiting his friends, the Pauldings, in Tarrytown Irving "heard all sorts of stories there that he was to retell in later years, the story of Hulda, the witch, for instance, and the woman of the cliffs, who was seen on the top of the rocks when a storm was rising" (4).

In the German legend the Frau Holle myth is not only



associated with Barbarossa, the sleeping king of the Kyffhaauser Mountain, but also with King Charles the Great and the Untersberg near Salzburg. These legends are so similar that there can be little doubt that they have the same origins. We know from Irving's Notebooks that he was familiar with these legends.

"On a certain day of the year, about midnight, the Emperor is to be seen with his whole train of ministers and generals going in procession to the Cathedral of Sallsburg."

...  
"From the cleft whence the spirit of the Great Emperor issues to walk by night, the stream precipitates itself with a loud noise and falls in a variety of cascades down the deep and narrow gully which appears to have dug itself in the hard marble."

How similar this is to the description in the Rip Van Winkle story where "He found the gully . . . but to his astonishment a mountain stream was now foaming down," and a bit later on, "the rocks presented a high, impenetrable wall over which the torrent came tumblin in a sheet of feathery foam" (21).

The termagant Dame Van Winkle, the Squaw Spirit, Frau Holle of the German legends and Persephone of antiquity, represent ambivalent female figures of fertility and fierceness. This ambivalence is perhaps expressed in the two different ways of referring to Frau Holle: sometimes spelled "Holle" and sometimes "Holde." While it is not certain whether the former is connected with the German word for hell, "Hoelle," the latter stands for benevolent and kind, used at times for the Virgin Mary. Compare this to the antithesis of Dame Van Winkle and Mrs. Hoffman whom Irving likened to the Virgin Mary!

Beginning her wanderings around Christmas time (9) Frau Holle belongs to the universal "kind and unkind" motif, a goddess of fertility and maternal deity, - a witch and leader of the wild hunt. We find here a link between Rip Van Winkle and the Legend of Sleepy Hollow in which a headless horseman conducts the wild hunt. Both of these

stories appeared in the "Sketchbook," and since they are the only two in the collection which Irving ascribed to Diedrich Knickerbocker, I consider them a literary unit.

The trail of this "kind-unkind" motif can be followed back to antiquity. Just as Frau Holde in the German legends, so is Persephone an "kind-unkind" motif of long ago. Onians (30) call her the "corn-maiden," "who is an avenging spirit like an eriny or angry Psyche." She represents the creative and destructive power, at one and the same time held to be both the cause and effect of fertility and destruction (2). Persephone, who according to Greek legend spends a third of each year in the lower world and the rest of the year with the gods above, thus became for the ancients the symbol of immortality (35). This aspect of Persephone, living in the world of the dead without being dead, has been noted to be a characteristic of almost all of the "sleeper" legends. In some of those legends we can also find traces of the fertility idea so intrinsically connected with the Holle and Persephone legends.

As we trace the figures of Dame Van Winkle, the Squaw Spirit, Frau Holle and Persephone around the world and through history and see them representing both creative and destructive power, we can hardly fail to recognize the two unconscious infantile images of the good (giving) and the bad (denying) mother. This universal motif may be a projection into the outside of ambivalent love-hate within the person, although it might even go further back to the differentiation between the self and the object.

Why did Irving make such prominent use of Dame Van Winkle in his story? Here we can draw on our analytic knowledge. Irving wrote the story following the death of his mother, and, I believe, in order to cope with his ambivalent feels for her. The reality situation was that his good mother left him when she died. By leaving him, the good mother is turned into the bad mother. In addition, the creative process, similar to the dream reversed the reality situation. Instead of the good mother leaving him, he takes flight from the bad mother against whom the expression of

hatred is justified. In the story he flees from the horrible termagant Dame Van Winkle.

### Concluding Remarks

In the wealth of material presented over a long period in the analysis of a patient, one particular dream may be reported which turns out to be richer in associations and the material it produces and which provides a better understanding of the patient's personality structure. In so many ways does the dream become associated in the mind of the analyst with this patient, that this connection remains forever in his mind.

My interest in Rip Van Winkle and its author, Washington Irving, began a number of years ago when in the course of her analysis a patient reported a dream which consisted of three words she heard spoken, — "Rip Van Winkle." This proved to be a key dream in this young woman's analysis. It was this dream which prompted my investigation of Rip Van Winkle and Washington Irving, and lead, eventually, to this paper.

Like the dream, a story is a communication from the author to the audience and the analyst turned biographer can give meaningful structure to highly complex and diverse biographical information (14). It is my hope that this investigation of Washington Irving and Rip Van Winkle may contribute toward our understanding of the motivation entering into the creative process.

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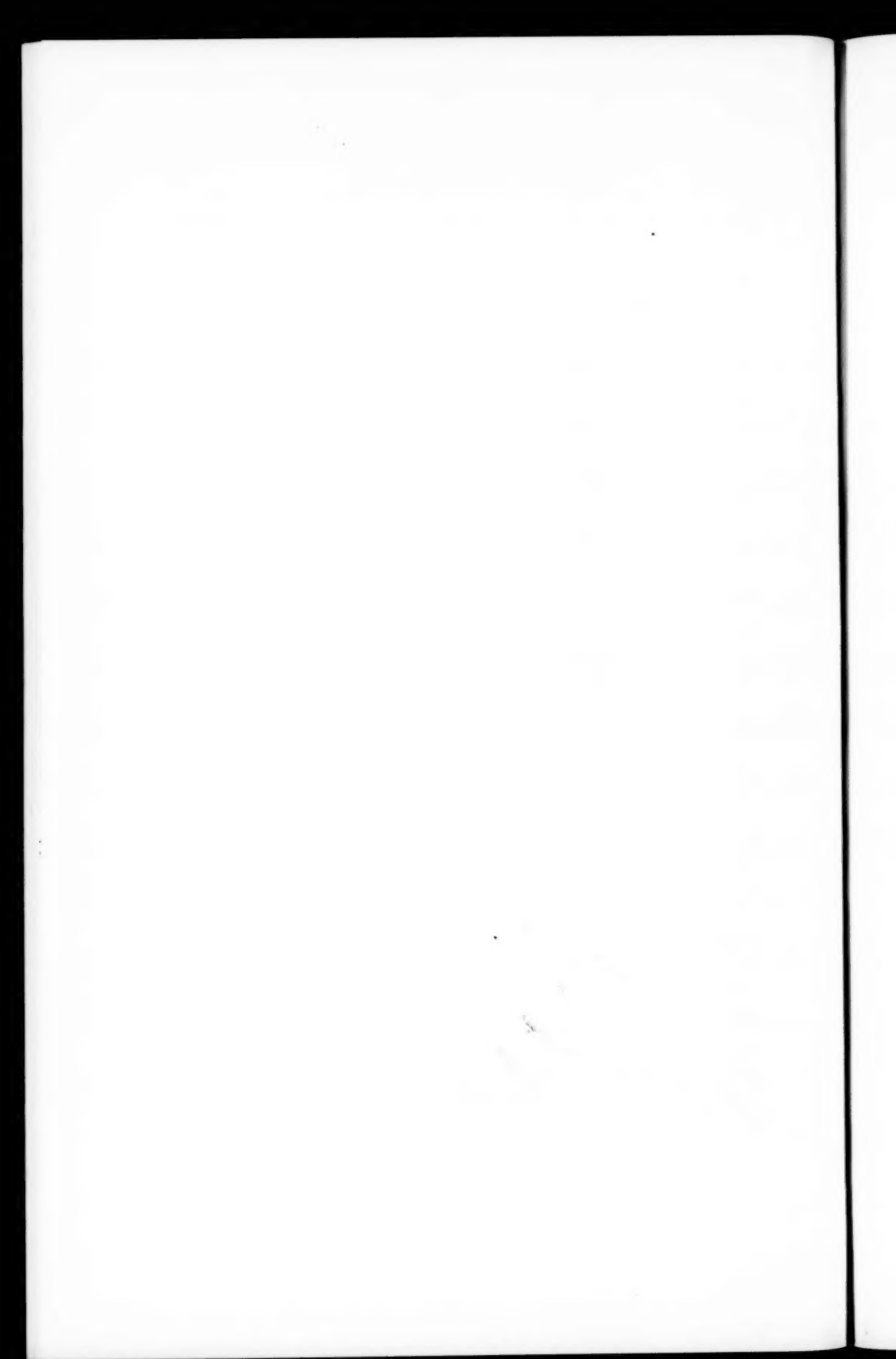
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# Shakespeare's Portia

by

A. Fodor (Jerusalem)

Should there ever arise any doubts as to the possibility that a stage figure may indeed become in the human imagination transmuted into a character endowed with as vivid and realistic traits as to evoke the impression of a historical person, we have but to point at Shakespeare's Shylock. He quite undeniably was the creation of poetic fantasy, intended for the stage, and nevertheless, subsequently succeeded in acquiring such strong and clearly cut features in man's unconscious mind, as to be visualized by the readers and spectators of the play as a quasi-historical figure instead of a poet's fancy product. Thus, Shylock turned into the realistic impersonation of the Jew, not without most repulsive and abominable propensities being conferred on him and ever since attributed to the members of his race.<sup>1</sup>

As to the essential motifs deriving from sources which had evidently been used by Shakespeare, the following have to be noted: a) A debt amounting to 3,000 ducats owed by the merchant Antonio to the Jewish money-lender Shylock has to be settled according to the obligation laid down by the debtor in a bond: in case of his inability of refunding

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1. M. J. Landa has collected in his monograph "The Shylok Myth" (1942) the possible origins of the Shakespearean plot. (a) the Latin story "The Dolopathes or the King of the Seven Wise Men" (1200), (b) the "Legend of the Holy Rood", (c) the poem "Cursor Mundi" (anonymous, about 1290). As early as 1875 L. T. Smith showed that there were no less than 15 versions of the pound-flesh motif, four of which failed to mention a Jew at all. A 14th century edition of *Gesta Romanorum* was time and again denoted as the source of Giovanni Fiorentino's short story "Il Pecorone". A French version of "Cursor Mundi" was discovered by A. S. Napier in 1894.

the sum on the day of payment, a pound of flesh to be cut out of his chest. b) The debtor actually being insolvent on that very day, is rescued by a lady of high social standing (as in *Cursor Mundi*, Queen Eline), emerging in the role of a justice and helping to extricate him from his peril. It is the noble Portia of Belmont, who in a judge's disguise, and thus unrecognizable to the Duke of Venice and her friends, carries the legal procedure which issues in Antonio's acquittal and Shylock's condemnation, who thus is deprived of his property and forced to conversion. (In *Cursor Mundi*, Queen Eline functions as a justice and no conversion of the Jew ensues, but instead, his disclosure of the secret place of the Holy Rood.) c) In accord with the legacy left by her defunct father, the noble Lady of Belmont is bound to acquire her future husband by means of a "Casket-choice", in which the suitor, choosing between three caskets, has to hit upon the right one to take possession of the beautiful heiress. (It should be mentioned that in *Il Pecorone* a similar trial does not consist in a fateful choice as this, but in the rather crude task of the suitor lying in bed with the lady and doing credit to his masculinity after having beforehand drunken a soporific beverage.)

Another point in Shakespeare's play is the debtor's taking the loan of 3,000 ducats from Shylock to bestow it upon his young friend, Bassanio, Portia's suitor, and thus falling in bondage to the benefit of the latter. Bassanio, thanks to Antonio's good offices, is now well provided with the indispensable means for his role as the suitor of a noble heiress.

Both in *Cursor Mundi* and *The Merchant of Venice*, the lady of noble birth longs for what seems to be hugely vital for her existence: In the poem, Queen Eline is in search of the Holy Rood, topmost emblem of Christianity, whilst in the play, Portia greatly desires to find for herself the right husband. Essentially, the unconscious meaning of both objects is much the same, but for the difference of the degree of sublimation: in the medieval poem, it is enhanced onto the level of Christian mysticism, whereas in the play it aims at the spirit of Classicism conjured up in the plot. As



against this, in Fiorentino's short-story there is no attempt at sublimation, and quite evidently the narrative in its rather cynical way, as is usual with Renaissance writers, suffered from no inhibition.

As to the "Casket-choice", it is important to note that it was apparently left to chance or fate, each suitor being bound to apply himself to a fortuitous selection of one of three caskets, made of gold, silver and lead, respectively, and containing the sentence on him who chooses it.

We must, however, suspect that in this choice-scene there underlies a dramatic effect intended by Shakespeare, rather than the finger of Fate. In this context, we have to refer to Freud's analysis of the Casket-choice. (1) The choice of the third casket, though made only of humble lead, brings victory to him who chooses it, whereas the other two, made of noble gold and pretentious silver, are very suitable to seduce the greedy candidates, only to let them down in the end. Freud emphasized the symbolic signification of the three metals as "reversal to the opposite"; consequently, instead of a death-symbol, its usual significance, lead has to be regarded at the same time as a symbol of Life and Love, the association of Eros as well as of Thanatos with the Love Goddess. Choosing lead, therefore, may be presumed to stand for the right touchstone for recognizing the worthiest suitor, so that we may well infer that nothing like blind fate or chance rules the choice, but the testator's cautious foresight and wisely premeditated device in his daughter's behalf, to which paternal bid she loyally submits. Actually, she thus takes the initiative herself in the choice procedure, while in its staged form it is mainly aimed at delighting the spectator, and thus possesses in the frame of the whole play merely the value, as it were, of a side-show. Unquestionably, there were several other dramatic solutions at the poet's disposal. The conviction that the choice is made by Portia herself grows upon us long before we are confronted with the casket scene ending in Bassanio's fortunate choice, especially due to the previous dialogue between the lady and her maid. (Act I, Scene II).

## II.

In many respects a certain conformity of the dream, as interpreted by Freud, with a poet's fancy plot may be postulated. The dream discloses as its chief formative elements firstly day-remnants deriving from experiences and impressions along with recent associations of the dreaming person and which by dint of the dream-work are woven into the texture of the manifest dream-content; secondly, the latent, i.e. hidden, dream-thought which can be unveiled and brought to light only by way of expert dream-interpretation. Generally speaking, the "manifest" plot of a poet's work is also achieved under the influence not merely of literary sources at his disposal, but likewise by events of his personal life, of which many are certainly attributable to cross-currents in public sentiment, as well as certain emotional vibrations prevailing in his immediate environment. They all will exert their effect upon him, which to evade he is as little able as his contemporaries and their effect on the plot of his creation may thus correspond to that of the day-remnants on dream-formation. In both cases, dream and poem, suppressed motives and impulse-affects are hidden in the unconscious beyond the range of their manifest contents, and from here break forth into the conscious mind, and will give impetus to, and even prove decisive of, the ultimate form of the manifest plot.

Examining *The Merchant of Venice* from this angle, we cannot escape the impression that the cross-currents and moods of English public life at Shakespeare's times, of which he must have certainly been well aware, exerted their greatest influence on him, a circumstance of which we have first to take cognizance before enquiring after the effects that originated in the poet's unconscious ego.

It has to be recalled that the play was written in the nineties of the 16th Century, being first mentioned in 1598, whilst its Quarto edition appeared in 1600. In 1594, however, Roderick Lopes, the Jewish physician-ordinary to the Queen, had been executed at Tryburn under the indictment of high-treason (2), and following his condemnation, along

with anti-Catholic feeling, anti-Jewish emotion gathered considerable momentum throughout the Kingdom. In that age, the intellectual élite, represented foremost by the Clergy, could hardly be expected to step in valiantly for the cause of a political scapegoat, as middle-class intelligentsia would do in the 18th Century. Nobody undertook to investigate the case of Dr. Lopes, whether the indictment against him was really justified, or whether, justice was miscarried, confronting the world once more with a judicial murder. The influential group in the Queen's entourage was definitely convinced of his guilt; that proved to be a sufficient reason for the sentence pronounced on him, or on any other person in his place. From the standpoint of morality it was not in the least incumbent on a commoner to decide whether by the verdict on the doctor justice was done, or injustice committed. Loyalty, allegiance to his sovereign, who was so by divine will, chivalry and all the other features of feudal origin ranked topmost, whereas Justice and the Rights of Man, a much later concept, ranked lowest. A verdict passed by the royal jury, even though based on prejudice and false denunciation, could by no means have been challenged on account of public sentiment, although it is evident today that the old man was sacrificed for political expediency. Indubitably, Shakespeare identified himself without any further criticism with the view shared by the high nobility, the peers of his nation.

Since many competent literary experts have in the past analyzed the dramatic action of *The Merchant of Venice*, our own views concerning this subject may be cut short. However, it is noteworthy that none of the critics was to discover the right approach to deal with the problem lying at the bottom of Shakespeare's play, whose traits, however complex and intricate by their very nature, had been brought by the poet's genius to such an overwhelming symmetry and harmony as to make the piece resound with the perfection and accordancy of a majestic musical symphony. While a considerable number of fairly gifted critics forwarded with greater or lesser success their interpretations of the very

significance of the plot, it was another poetical genius who in an essay on Portia came across the proper key: Heinrich Heine.

"If we envisage the latter (viz. Shylock) in accordance with the customary conception as the representative of rigid, severe, hostile-to-art Judaea, then Portia appears to us as the representative of that after-blossom of Greek spirit which, coming from Italy in the 16th Century, went on spreading its sweet scent over the world, and which we cherish still to-day, appreciating it under the name of 'Renaissance' ". (quoted from *Shakespeare's Mädchen und Frauen*, 1839).

This approach of the German poet has also been supported with great spiritual élan by the German writer, G. Landauer (3) in his analysis of Shakespeare's dramatical works: There does not seem to be a solution which would make better sense and be more convincing than Heine's.

Thus, following the poet's aesthetic trend of thinking, we recognize two leading ideas: One, the above-mentioned juxtaposition of those two different worlds. Renaissance spirit, to Shakespeare doubtless had a very concrete meaning, since it embodied something pertaining to the reality of his own life-time, and not as with ourselves, to a culture of a far-away past, surviving merely in the remnants of art and architecture. It is set against Shylock's world mirroring Jewish antiquity, the ghost of which had stubbornly persevered in as good as complete isolation. A foreign inimical influx, hovering about, uncannily and persistently, haunting the harmonious Renaissance environment, to which it is tethered by the wayward, ever so unaccountable fates of History. Utterly different worlds they are, which for all their existence under the same sky and external conditions, and for all their being exposed to identical needs and emergencies, mutually abstain from any intercourse or fraternization else enjoyed by human groups or beings.

The other leading idea, also originating in the poet's conscious, artistic thinking and then creatively embellished by his genius, discloses itself in those conventional character-

traits of Shylock, which as an exponent of that foreign, hostile world, he was to assume in the mind of the broad multitude, irrespective of all reality. The man of the street, just saw in the Jews none but the stubborn haters of Christians, ever ready to betray the Queen of England to her arch-enemy, Catholic Philip of Spain. Thus Shylock was to embody the contemporary Jew.

Both ideas, presenting two contrasting worlds and brought out in full relief by mutual distrust, suspicion and malevolence, constitute the outline of the play. As to the Jew's world, it is Shylock who comes to the fore as its sole representative, his co-religionist Tubal having but a small and ephemeric role, evidently to create the impression that there existed a Jewish community and a synagogue at Venice. The rest of the characters belong to Renaissance humanity, with divine Portia placed top-most in the centre of the *jeunesse dorée* of that splendid city: noble Italian youth drawn in accordance with the spirit of Classicism. They are the exponents of the Renaissance culture with its trend of Greek aestheticism, invariably enlivening and invigorating their wanton, exuberant joys and unbounded merriments, their chivalrous friendships, their standing-up for a friend in need. A brilliant and ideal form of human existence is presented here against the bleak, inhuman materialism of Shylock, permanently on the alert, equally ready for self-defence, as well as for attack, of that more fortunate people. All is achieved to impress on us the ineffable contrast between the sunny firmament of Italy and the dark crevices of Hinnom Valley, in inhospitable Judaea.

There would be nothing to bridge the gulf between those two human species, ever ready to get at each other's throat, had not the poet created the character of Jessica, who in the Jewish camp, plays, as it were, the role of a fifth column, and eventually elopes with her lover of the ranks of that glorious Renaissance youth, not failing to take with herself her father's amassed ducats and jewels. She is carried off into her lover's gleaming world, where he marries her. By the renegade daughter's betrayal, Shylock's tragic

situation is brought to such a tremendous climax that he is bereft of the last vestige of human emotion and guided only by blind wrath and fury as are engendered in a revengeful animal.

### III.

Let us now enquire after those active powers which must have sprung from the sphere of the poet's unconscious mind, and gathered momentum as he worked on the plot of the play. Powers of such a quality, actuated and goading the poet's or artist's creative work, may stream from two different sources: One of them must be sought for in the individual's mental life, as it originates from the ego's childhood-experiences, passes on through the various stages of his libidinal development and, finally, culminates in the adult's character-organization and personality, implying all of his instinctual desires, repressions, ego-defence mechanisms and, maybe, reaction-formations. In other words, they are mental powers mainly of an environmental provenance.

On the other hand, mental powers may come into effect by dint of a break-through from the person's unconscious mind of inherited elements and its constituents, which are to a no lesser degree common to all people, and to which an archaic origin is attributable to the same extent as to somatic characteristics. Repressions into the unconscious of archaic derivation, or their replacement in the conscious mind by symbols, were accomplished whenever the repressed fantasy or desire no longer proved consistent with the requirements of the prevalent form of a civilization.

All this appeals to man in general, not excepting even the greatest poet's fantasies (day-dreams); for though they are peculiar to him, they don't differ from those which are characteristic of average people, or, so far as their genealogy is concerned, of the mythical fantasy of mankind as a whole. Both may resort to the ego's unconscious archaic fixtures, and many-fold were the attempts of analysts to reveal in the writings of poets instances of a break-through into the conscious mind of unconscious motives and ideas, likely to shed some light upon their character-organization. Yet from



the very beginning, such attempts are only fairly promising in such cases, where along with the availability of firmly reliable biographical facts a good deal of the writer's instinctual life comes to the fore in his work; especially if the selfsame ideas recur with a certain regularity, even substantiated in a more or less obsessive fashion.

Conditions such as these do not, however apply to Shakespeare's plays, which not only lack in any kind of monomaniacal strain, but moreover reveal a prodigious display in the creation of human characters. For all their having been engendered by a poet's creative imagination, his creatures as genuine as though they had been brought forth by Nature's creative powers. An achievement like this enables one to deem possible the premise that while the great poet was not endowed with any faculty other than is generally human, he is able, in contradistinction to average people to heave repressed archaic motives, as it were, unimpaired by inhibitions, from their unconscious abode onto the spheres of conscious thinking. Thus he is able to actuate his unconscious, assisted, as it were, by a "mysterious" potency of his exceptional intellect, missing in ordinary mortals. We may well infer, on this head, that in the great poet's ego the bulk of the unconscious elements in question are most easily led to a state denoted by Freud as "pre-conscious" (*vorbewusst*), thus to become easily ejected into the circuits of the conscious. Again must this hold true in contradistinction to such individuals upon whom no such gift was conferred and who, therefore, will keep constituents, or complexes, belonging to their unconscious, in a more or less rigid state of repression, at best bringing them partially to the fore in their dreams, viz., under conditions in which inhibitions otherwise on the alert, as well as volitions, are practically silenced.

How else should we comprehend the birth of Shakespeare's innumerable characters, such as Hamlet, Macbeth, Lear, Richard III, Coriolanus, etc., etc., if not under the assumption that they must have been known in some pristine form to his unconscious mind, and that through the poet's



genius they became flesh and blood by being shaped into genuine human creatures, the raw-material for which might have stemmed from any source: History, daily life, or even a cheap and worthless fairing?

Thus, Shylock's, as well as Portia's, character must have pre-existed in Shakespeare's unconscious, whence they had been lifted, becoming conscious and substantiated within the frame of a dramatic plot whose principal traits the poet had actually marshalled from the extant literature. But let us ask whether the unconscious pre-existence of both Shylock and Portia really applies to Shylock, the Jew, and Portia, the noble Lady of Belmont. Was it really they whose live images have to be envisaged as pre-existent in the unconscious, and had the poet merely to invent names, and provide for them attires, ere introducing both into the dramatic plot which he had found as good as ready-made in several banal stories?

Rather maintain we the view that ever since these primeval "imageries" did, and still do, pre-exist in the unconscious of man in general, to whatsoever civilization he might have belonged; though the gift of endowing them with the breath of life, and of elevating them onto the summit of poetical creativity, was reserved to a Shakespeare. Otherwise, Shylock's character would have never risen in such vivid and true colors as even to cause some writers to suggest the "revision" of the judgment in the play, as if he had really lived. To bring before a court, whatever its form might be, the case of somebody who had lived in a poet's fancy several centuries ago and never trotted the soil of this planet, sounds a rather strange proposition, unless it be admitted that effectively the "imagery" of Shylock was living in the unconscious mind of mankind, which, however, failed to take cognizance of it.

However, the poet himself raises the question: "Tell me where is fancy bred, Or in the heart or in the head?" Our reply is clear-cut enough: to be sure, not in the head! But though the suggestion sounds grotesque, it does not seem unreasonable, for Shylock lived, he even continues to live

in man's unconscious mind, albeit not as Shylock the Jew, but as a potential image which, having been thrust into Shakespeare's conscious, was here supplanted by that of a contemporary Jew, as it might have been by any other character, depending on the coinage it was to obtain by the poet's hand, all of which could however be expected to betray conform basic character-traits.

Had Shylock embodied none else than a stage-Jew of the order of Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, had he not really arisen from man's unconscious sphere where he was, as it were, living the life of a hidden entity, a potential primeval "imagery",<sup>2</sup> he had as little been endowed by civilized humanity with the traits of a quasi-historical character such as the Jew of Malta, and mankind would set but small store by placing him into the focus of one of their uppermost moral problems, any more than other stage-Jews.

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2. The author has enlarged upon the effect of the ambivalent character of the child's emotional relations to his parents, issuing in the separation of their "imageries" into two complementary parts, e.g. the "good" and the "evil" father and mother. (5). Those of the "evil" father and the "good" mother have to be regarded as primeval constituents of man's religious culture. Projection off the unconscious on external objects of the primeval father's imagery will have as its first result the emergence of the object overshadowed by the projected impulse-affection; later, once this impulse-affection becomes better adapted to reality, or is submitted to educational efforts, a modified imagery of the object is introjected into the ego, thus leading to the "good" father and, finally, to the Father God. Religions with exclusive rights granted to paternal Gods rejected finally the primeval "good" mother, replacing her by degraded love goddesses, demonesses or the witch. Along with it the imagery of "evil" and "good" brothers and sisters was created. However, imagery by no means signifies something preformed and lingering in the unconscious, but is rather thought to be non-existent as an imagery prior to the objectivation of the impulse-affections. Thus, man overflows with vague imageries which is well brought out in history. Outstanding historical characters virtually embody but make-shift objectivations of unconscious impulses, sometimes clapped into a cliché of legendary representations achieved by wishfull thinking.

Thus, basically, it is not at all the problem of Shylock the Jew which impcises itself upon us, since as was rightly pointed out by several critics in the past, his dominant character-traits, but for the specific hatred of Christians, were universally human, and not particularly Jewish. Attributes like greediness, niggardliness, xenophobia in an inimical environment may equally be shared by Jews and Gentiles. Discounting the hatred of Christians, we discover in Molière's Harpagon just another chip off the same block, for while Shylock shouts "My ducats, oh, my ducats!", the Avare takes to *ma cassette, oh ma cassette!* In the case of Shylock, we are scarcely, if at all, confronted with the rest of the traits which, as genuinely Jewish, could, if welded into a whole with other more propitiatory ones, well have brought forth the compound character belonging to a real Jew, which remained unknown to Shakespeare who was only interested in moulding Shylock in a way to make him chime with the conventional concept of the contemporary Jew. Yet we may safely state that without these other traits, of which Shylock has been deprived as a presumptive Jew, the daybreak of Christianity would hardly have ever arrived.

Rather, Shakespeare dressed the pristine imagery stemming from his unconscious ego, in the attire of a Jew, by conferring on him all the character traits that were supposed at his own epoch to be typically Jewish. Or, availing ourselves of the concepts furnished by the projection-mechanism well-known in Psychoanalysis: Shylock's primeval "imagery", virtually consisting in impulse-affects breaking forth from the poet's unconscious, was projected on a conventional Jew in that very environment, and the affections thus objectified. However, the character of Shylock tells us a great deal more than has been effectuated by a mere masquerade, his Jewishness and hostility toward Gentiles. For even if we were to try to divest him of his Jewish attire, deprive him of the traits of his outward demeanour, and eliminate from his character anything having a reference, or allusion, to religious antagonism, an experiment we neither hold enticing nor promising, still as to his *basic* character

Shylock would remain Shylock. He would now shrink to the state of the primeval monster, from whose very "imagery" he went forth, and instead of recognizing a Jew, we were bound to find some other form of objectivation.

The projected "imagery" of Shylock is none but that of the pristine ("evil") Father who for all his being a hereditary constituent of the adult's unconscious ego will still be dreaded and abhorred, as is foremost elucidated by dreams in which he makes his appearance in various shapes. Perpetually threatening his sons with castration, this danger is evaded by their flight into the maternal compass.

This brings home also the fact that our irresistible liking for Portia's character, as to enhance her to a female invariably standing for our ideal of womanliness, neither lies in her beauty and noble extraction, nor in her riches and intelligence, in themselves all incidental and accessory, well-befitting movie stars. They are widely surpassed by the spell of her lofty maternal being,<sup>2</sup> profound feminine wisdom and helpfulness, the very qualities with which man has endowed the "good" Mother. Portia is not only beautiful and wise, but in the same measure full of noble feeling, eager to help when need calls for it, and merciful: "The quality of mercy is not strained; It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven. . . .".

If we recognize in Shylock the objectification of the "evil" Father's imagery supplemented by the attire, speech and gestures of a conventional Jew, then *a fortiori*, in Portia we behold the imagery of the "good" Mother, objectified in the character of the noble heiress of Belmont.

Furthermore, it is quite evident that the *jeunesse dorée* of that Renaissance scene, consist in none but the sons of the primeval Father whose steady menace with castration is not hidden in the least. On the contrary, we witness it when Shylock starts to sharpen his knife to carry out his disgusting resolve, even though in the play castration is deflected to the victim's breast, a shift, however, which is of no consequence for the unconscious desire. But for the intervention of Mother Portia, her rushing to the rescue of

her son, was the tragical issue averted. It is the repetition of the archaic situation.

All this leads us to the conclusion that it is but from the viewpoint of Literary History that the idea of setting Jewish antiquity against the world of the Renaissance may prove to be the right conception of Shakespeare's intention. It deems well-justifiable considering the selection of the time, spot and dramatical action of the play, whereas quite different vistas open themselves to the Psychologist who will recognize the perennial contrast mirrored in the two inimical spheres: *The paternal set against the maternal world*. Both have a powerful hold on man's unconscious mind, causing the discharge and break-through from it of inborn affective forces which disclose themselves in the shape of ego-activities, be it on a mythical, religious or social level, or as in our present case, in the realm of poetry.

As to the quality of these mental powers which derive from the poet's own libidinal development and from the display of his individual character-organization, in Shakespeare's case, on account of the scarce biographical material, we must feel far-goingly at a loss. The circumstance, first emphasized by Otto Rank, and by E. Jones, (4) that in a great number of his tragedies the Oedipal *motif* is brought out in strong relief (so in Hamlet, Julius Caesar, the King Henry dramas, etc.), has a ring short of truism nowadays, when the wide dissemination of the neurotic symptoms it involves is sufficiently recognized. It should not, therefore, make us wonder if the affair of Dr. Lopes, which stimulated the poet's Oedipal affects, had goaded him to write *The Merchant of Venice*. But there is scarcely anything known about his parental relations, while circumstantial evidence, being often adduced by psycho-analysis where direct proofs are missing, seems fully out of place in cases lacking in circumstantial facts, the only substantial fact consisting in the contentious object itself, i.e. Shylock's character. Apart from this, there are few works in literature which would not imply the characters of the "evil" or "good" Father and Mother, or their substitutes (imagos), and which, along

with it, would not reverberate the corresponding filial emotions. Let us take but one of the great novels of Dickens, Thackeray, Balzac, Stendhal, Tolstoi, Dostoewski, etc., and we will easily enough be aware of it. And, after all, has not psycho-analytic research to be credited for the general recognition of the quasi-ubiquitous nature of the Oedipal *motif*?

So it might actually have proven decisive in Shakespeare's works, and also at making him visualize in Dr. Lopes a father-imago after whose imagery he then modelled Shylock. However, there is nothing for the time being at our disposal to prove the point decisively. On the other hand, it would be rather consistent with the foregoing to deem it probable that the projection off the poet's unconscious mind of inborn hostile impulse-affections to overshadow the figure of Dr. Lopes was actuated with nothing like a personal Oedipal complex.

For we should duly consider what might be suitably denominated as a *Secular Oedipal Complex*, inherent in mankind as an entirety: a repressive process moving towards the gradual substitution of the "evil" Father's imagery, (the selfsame as had swayed sceptre over mankind for ten thousands of years on end), by the imagery of the "good" Father, which was to gain a hold on man since the dawn of Father religions. Ever since the beginning of those very civilizations which gave birth to the monotheistic creeds, man endeavoured to suppress step by step the supernatural objectifications of the "evil" Father, viz. evil spirits or pernicious godheads, by resorting to the idea of benevolent deities, eventually arriving at the concept of the universal Good Father God. (A psychically determined turn finally to lead to the gradual depreciation of the primordial "good" Mother's imagery, as revealed in the selfsame monotheistic creeds by the progressive degradation of the *Magna Mater* (5) in any of her various shapes, to the level of love-goddesses or demoniac entities). Assumably this secular repressive process has hardly reached its peak, even at our times (the age of monotheistic religious cults is not amounting to more than about 2500 years), for, given proper con-



sideration, the *educational* repression of the Oedipal complex in the course of each individual infancy stands for as many infinitesimal apportionments whose integration, extended to whole mankind over a time-span of millennia, is bound to leap up to its (secular) *cultural* repression. Considerations on this line would also fairly account for the ubiquitous forthcoming of the Oedipal complex, irrespective of historical ages, geographical spots, races, or even different social structures attained by peoples of most various civilizations.<sup>3</sup>

3. Bronislaw Malinowski in "Mutterrechtliche Familie und Oedipus-Komplex" concluded that the Trobriander people harbour an affection essentially different from the Oedipus complex as is characteristic of patrilineal societies. The Trobriander's aggression is directed towards his maternal uncle and the longed-for object is his sister. Although rejected by most psychoanalysts, this view deserves consideration, inasmuch as the desire to kill the father, be he the genuine one (*tama*) or the uncle (*kadaju*), and the incestuous claim to the daughters by the father, who fails to be of the same blood, might well have made up a persistent trend in the archaic clan-people's mental organization (S. Malinowski, *Imago X*, Vienna).

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# The Cockroach As An Identification; With Reference To Kafka's *Metamorphosis*.<sup>1</sup>

by

Peter A. Martin, M.D.

As Gregar Samsa awoke one morning from a troubled dream, he found himself changed in his bed to some monstrous kind of vermin. He lay on his back, which was as hard as armor plate, and raising his head a little, he could see the arch of his great brown belly, divided by bowed corrugations. The bedcover was slipping *helplessly* off the summit of the curve, and Gregar's legs, *pitiably thin* compared with their former size, *fluttered helplessly* before his eyes. "What has happened?", he thought, "It was no dream."<sup>2</sup>

These are the opening lines of a short story by Franz Kafka named *Metamorphosis* (1). Two analysts gave the contents of this gruesome story as important associations to crucial dreams. Analysis of these dreams indicated that the lasting impression made on these individuals by the story was due to the resulting recognition of their own long standing unconscious identification with a cockroach. The analyses of both of these patients revolved around this pathologic identification.

This paper aims at presenting the meaning of this identification. It is of importance to note that (1) the crucial cockroach identification was not a part of the analyses until

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1. Read at the Midwinter Meeting of The American Psychoanalytic Association in New York, December, 1956.
  2. Italics by author of this paper.

dream analysis brought it into consciousness and (2) once uncovered, this identification became the central theme of their analyses.

The first patient was a twenty-five year old female school librarian whose presenting symptom was severe episodes of vomiting. The stimulus for such episodes would be some demand made upon her. For example, if in answering the phone, a man would ask her for a date, she immediately became nauseated and had to struggle to prevent emesis. To illustrate, "When I get a phone call, I want to run away. I don't want any contact with people at all. I don't trust anybody. I don't love anybody. If I give a little, I have to give more and more. I have to be perfect. When I have contact with people, they take away my personality." Her first cockroach dream occurred during the second year of her analysis. In the period prior to the dream she had developed a very strong positive transference. In the analysis she constantly attempted to be a good girl and to do whatever she thought might please the analyst in hope that she would be loved in return. This transference was utilized to keep her from being hospitalized. The dream which follows is an important one because it illustrates the core of her neurosis, her personality structure, the transference neurosis, and her identification with Kafka's Cockroach.

DREAM: Part 1. "I walked out to the school with this counselor woman. She was trying to be nice to me. I decided to go along with her. Her car turned out to be a gigantic van brilliantly decorated. Her Dad was there. She kissed him. Then another girl, like me, drove the car and smacked the front end causing a lot of damage. But the councillor woman didn't care and her Dad didn't care.

Part 2. "Then I was with another teacher. I was driving my car. She was helping me and being very sympathetic. I couldn't move. I noticed this brown substance — very deep, knee level in my car. I thought she would be repulsed. But she wasn't. She was sympathetic. I said it was all right because it didn't get on my clothes. We came to a structure like the Parthenon. I drove up the steps and smashed my

car. But I did not care because any way I got there was all right. There was no elevator so I walked up five flights. You (the analyst) paid no attention to me. You were angry that I was late. Then I collapsed. I kissed your hand. Implored you to love me. You were aloof, detached and calm. You took more interest in my glasses. The frames were broken. You wanted to fix them so I wouldn't look so pitiful and have people laugh at me. I said I didn't want you to bother to have them fixed."

Her associations to this dream were: I'm like a child. I've never sailed by myself as an adult. I've let myself go to pot. I attach myself to a person. I make him God. Then I feel like a parasite. *I feel completely unworthy. The feeling of being like an insect is the feeling of being inferior.* I couldn't move in the dream. When a demand is made upon me, I become like that. I become sluggish like a bug. In *Metamorphosis*, he had all the responsibility of the family. He should have hated them. He turned into a bug and *retreated* all the way to the other extreme. From vitality and perfection and omnipotence like my mother, to not even being a human being like father. In the dream, sitting in the car in brown fluid is like in the book where he excretes the brown bowel movement. I feel like nothing, like nobody. The day doesn't go by when I don't feel depressed. I get feelings of inadequacy. Living frightens me. I don't want to go on. I want to sleep and push all activities away. As long as I don't move, as long as I stay in bed, I'm safe."

Much can be shown about this patient by utilizing this dream. For the purpose of this paper, the emphasis is on the meaning of an identification with a cockroach. It represents a feeling of being extremely *weak, inferior* and *unworthy*. The cockroach is a symbol of inadequacy.

The same meaning was brought out by the dream associations of a male engineer whose presenting symptoms on entering analysis were boredom and depression. His lengthy dream will not be given here, but his associations to the dream, to Kafka, and to his own identification with a cockroach were: "I feel that I'm different from other people.

I cannot have an interest in anything new, different or original. A feeling of a lack of ego. For example, I cannot accept that I am interested in making or doing anything. It makes me feel foolish and inferior. The feeling of worthlessness and weakness is the feeling of being a cockroach. A feeling of being depressed, beat, without identity or strength. So, if I were to raise my head ever so slightly and feel any criticism I would lower it again because I would feel it justified. That I am vaguely inferior."

A second conclusion is clearly illustrated in another dream of the engineer: "I see a casket in the shadows. My mother is kissing the body in the casket. It has a disease. It is a disease that has changed parts of the body into animal parts. Mother is sorry for what she did. The disease is caused by rejection from mother."

The second conclusion is that identification with a cockroach includes a feeling of being unloved and rejected by the important parent figure. In the first part of the librarian's dream, she shows a father who kisses his daughter and who does not become angry when a girl smashes a car. In the second part of her dream, she is collapsing, like a cockroach, because in contrast, when she smashes her car, she is not loved and the analyst is angry with her. The feeling of being unloved and criticized by the important parent figure is crucial to the development of an identification with a cockroach.

The engineer's mother and the librarian's father were to them the most important parent figures. Both of these parents became psychotic early in the lives of these analysands. These psychotic parents were narcissistic, self-centered, critical figures.

However, this important factor, rejection, by itself was not the decisive one in the final picture. A specific character trait in these analysands became the decisive factor. They both showed an inability to conceive of an evaluation of self not based on some other person's attitude. In his associations to the afore-mentioned dream, the engineer stated, "I cannot live under rejection. It causes a lack of self es-

teem. No matter what my mother is like, my worth is based on what my mother thinks of me. If rejected, I am worthless."

It is important to clearly illustrate this decisive character trait wherein every fibre of this type of patient is directed toward another person, placing the decision for life or death in the other person's hands and thus making of rejection a deadly weapon. These patients as a somebody or a something do not exist on their own. They exist only if they win favor in the eyes of another person. The librarian called her basic attitude, sensitivity. It was best illustrated by the following quotation:

"That soul that is accustomed to direct herself to god upon every occasion, that as a flower at sun-rising conceives a sense of God in every beam of his and spreads and dilates itself towards him in a thankfulnes in every small blessing that he sheds upon her, that soul that as a flower at the sun's declining contracts and gathers in and shuts up herself as though she had received a blow whensoever she hears her saviour wounded by an oath or blasphemy or execration, that soul who, whatsoever string be stricken in her, bass or treble, her high or low estate is ever turned toward God, that soul prays sometimes when it does not know it prays."  
(2)

This "sensitivity" was cathected by these patients. "There is something beautiful in being sensitive like a flower. There is glory in being a perishable object." These patients bruised with each injury instead of maturing. Instead of generating their own power they looked to other people for their source of energy and were "squashed" when not loved.

Thus, the disease from which these patients suffered could not be solely explained as the engineer attempted to do in the manifest content of his dream, as one due to lack of love from a rejecting psychotic parent but could be understood when this trauma occurred in conjunction with an inherent inability in the patient to form independent evaluations of his own worth. Though they both received master of arts degrees and became successful in their occupations,

they never lost their sense of shame and degradation identified with their childhood experiences.

There was one final factor that determined their inability to individuate. This was the affliction of sudden, physically disabling symptoms which were somatic manifestations of their anxiety. They described it as a physical thing that just came out of the blue and made them feel doomed forever to be like a cockroach.

The librarian's symptom, as described previously, was vomiting. This prevented her from taking trips or accepting dining dates. The physical symptoms and their genesis are best described in another of her dreams: "I am in a room touching something that gave me an electric shock. There was another person watching me. My body is immobile. I'm going into a deep sleep and going to die. It is the cockroach feeling. I had it before. I must move. I seem to be sinking or falling. I force myself to wake up, to move, to get away from the electrically charged area in order to survive." Her immediate association was: "The electric shock is the rejection from a cruel, mean person who doesn't love her. Physical paralysis is the fear of going mad with hate for not being loved. When I give in to hate, I don't want to do anything."

The engineer's physical symptom was impotence and premature ejaculation which made him feel mortified and like a cockroach. Also, when in the analysis he would recapture his repressed feelings about his mother, the emotional outburst would not be in crying or verbalization but would result in severe, painful, terrifying tetany of all the muscles of his body. He also developed dizziness that made leaving the analytic room difficult.

In summary, the identification with a cockroach is a feeling of being weak, small, inferior, repulsive and unloved. It is related to an inability of the individual to differentiate his worth from his parents' rejecting attitudes and occurs to individuals who are extremely sensitive and who are keyed to other people, thus preventing individuation. These feel-

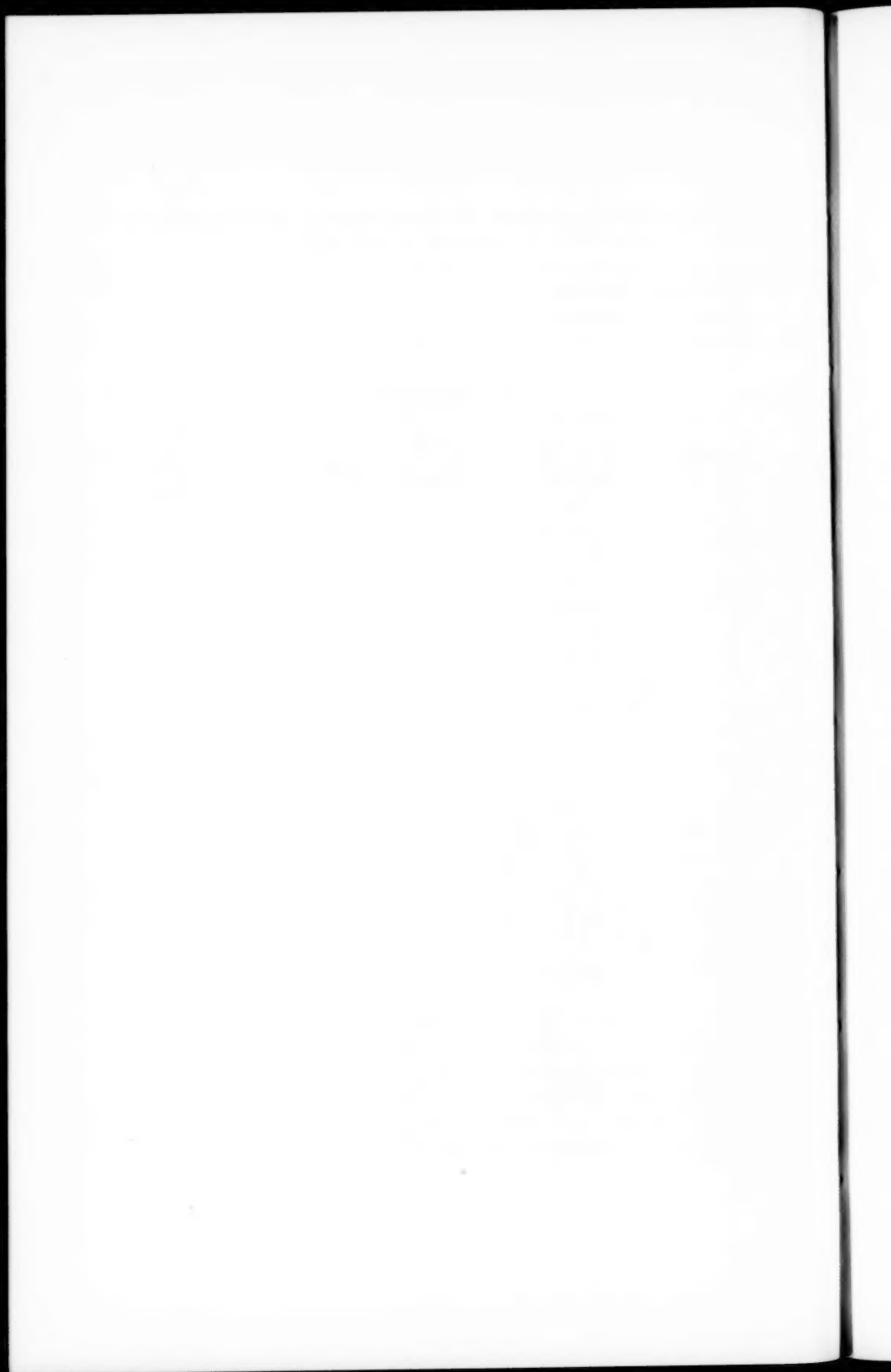
ings are made permanent by incapacitating physical symptoms resulting from the patient's severe anxiety.

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# Freud and the Crisis of Our Culture

by

Lionel Trilling

Beacon Press, Boston, \$1.00, 59 pp.

In his *Masks of Love and Life*, Hanns Sachs makes use of the image of a frightened child locked in a room, all of whose doors are open. Dr. Sachs viewed Freudian analysis as one way to walk manly through those doors. In Lionel Trilling's exciting Fifth Anniversary Lecture of the New York Psychoanalytic Institute, this important critic has attested that even at this congested mid-century, when the secrets beyond the door to the future hold more terror than ever, when it has become routine to begin analysis with the disavowal of miracle—even now sinister, the doors to life swing greedily open.

Those who have been in analysis well remember the freedom which comes when antique anxieties are lanced, the liberation which ensues from dipping into the interdicted corridors of time—in the growing awareness that memory can be ally as well as curse: that to live *with* the past is the best way not to live *within* the past. In our time of security, it is to be expected that any burst of freedom should be met with reaction. Thus we have the sad anomaly of the "beat" generation obsessed with the goals of status, safety, tenure. In his essay, Mr. Trilling scores these siren songs of security, and in his own Burke's-eye view, indicates that it is now the "terrible principal of culture" which corrupts. The controversial young hero of *Tea and Sympathy* can be, as Mr. Eric Bentley has pointed out, any progressively courageous thing he chooses, and he can be as different as he likes: in short, he can be *anything*, so long as he is not *really* homosexual, and is given the wonderful chance to make abundantly clear

to the audience his prowess by the end of the third act. The casual orderliness of an ACLU meeting would set Thoreau to noisy desperation. The group projects of the Ford Foundation leave no one in particular to be disgraced, even when a particular job may be botched. And, groups of film makers grind into conventional chaff the anti-social plays of Clifford Odets and Tennessee Williams.

But, Mr. Trilling invokes the life force to challenge even "the terrible principal of culture"—for the seductions of Paris labels and University imprimaturs are quite persuasive: face it, Herman Wouk's anthology of bourgeois defenses against anxiety from mink to Jaguar, to the Racket Club in Palm Springs, are dammed tempting. It is perversity which can effectively challenge this array of society: it is something beyond psychoanalysis itself; it is old-fashioned heredity, *donée*, that individual *given*—that biological necessity which exists on the other side of good and evil. And, Trilling's surprise witness is, of course, Sigmund Freud. Freud was no product of his culture in the sense he was able to defy and transcend his environment, that anti-Semitic, corrupt Vienna of his formative years, so akin to the Vienna of Shakespeare in *Measure for Measure* where oppressiveness was made bearable only by dint of Balkan comic-opera inefficiency. Today's culture guards are, alas, less susceptible to graft. Big Brother is indeed watching, and the only plot in the comedy is the one against the audience.

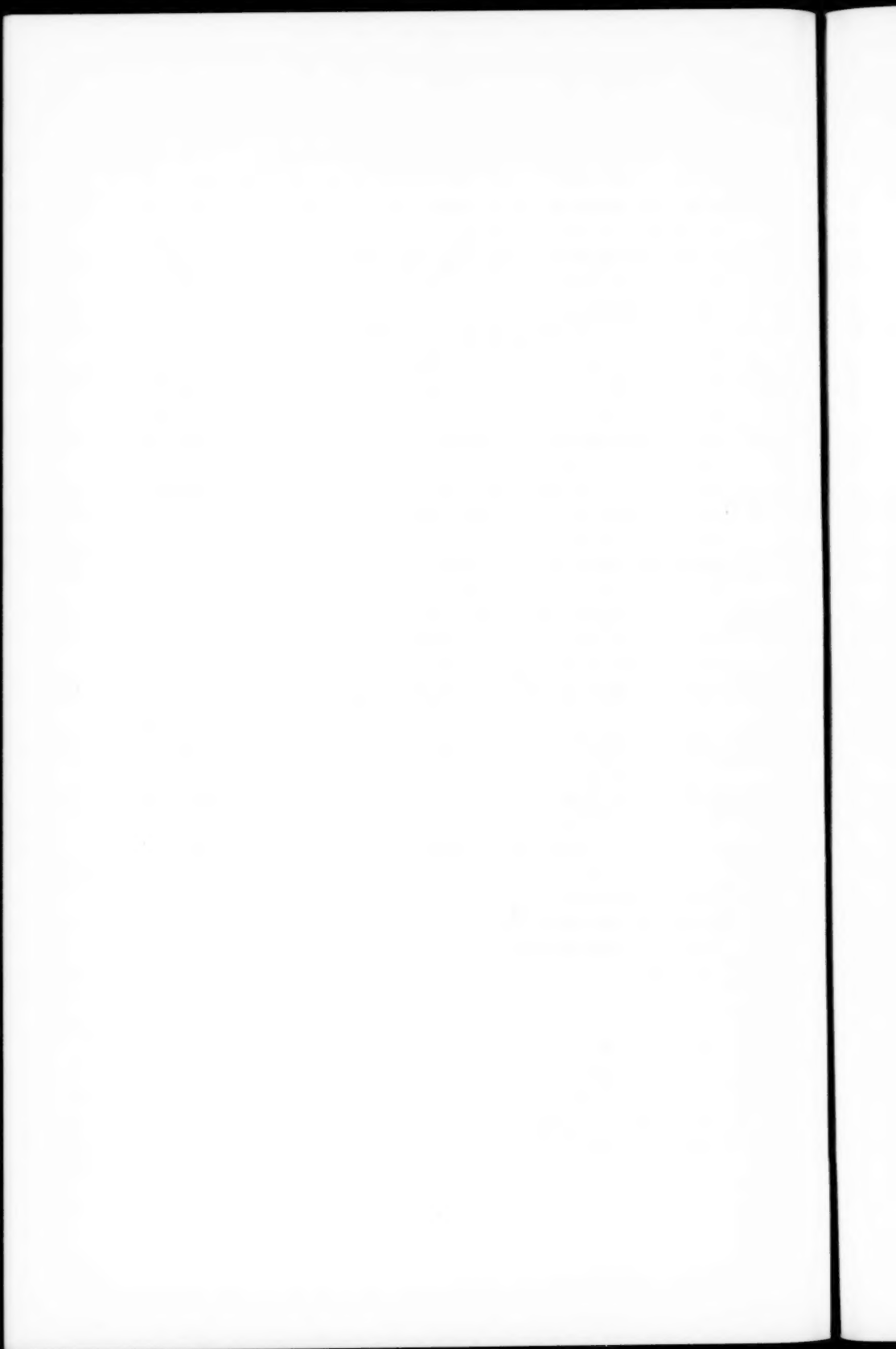
The *given*, however, is not beyond analysis in that it can be *used*. Analysis teaches the use of the stuffs of life to attain its goals of making man more of what he already is, namely human. What is the reality principal, but to mold those very conditions which prevail? The proofs of the indestructibility of the self are that parts of the self may remain inaccessible to change.

Lionel Trilling does many other things in his essay beside his restatement of recalcitrance—that a man can still stick his tongue out at society, keeping his job and out of jail. Henry James to the stand: "The ability to dare and endure, to know and not to fear reality, to look the world

in the face and take it for what it is, . . . this is what I want to preserve." James' Bostonian too could keep the courage of his hallucinations and resist the cult of the well-adjusted: if you can't beat 'em, join 'em. James' Ransom kept his "masculine character."

Further, Trilling nicely analogizes psychoanalysis to literature, saying that art is dedicated to the conception of the self, even when it is an opposing self. For, surely, analysis criticizes society in the same way in which Matthew Arnold meant that literature criticizes life. It may be expedient to endorse the slogans, and recruit for the causes, of society; but the self knows that these cultural values are wrong! "Art," again Henry James, "is our flounderings shown." Analysis itself may become mundane: the tired doctor, who would like to be paid on time, becomes bored with the complaints everlasting of the dull ungrateful patient who refuses to abide even by the rubbery rules of reality. The world we live in may be one constructed upon original sin, though Freud may have given us an up-to-date codification which transmogrifies sin into the death instinct, whereby organic matter strives to the surcease of the inorganic. Even so, man cannot live by sin alone. Analysis, Freud, the poets, the self, and now the deponent, Trilling, attest to the miracle of Life. As trilled by Yeats, "the fiddles are tuning all over the world." How can the rotted chatter of past defeats matter when awareness of living itself defeats defeat, despair?

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# Portals of Discovery\*

by

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A man of genius makes no mistakes. His errors are volitional and are the portals of discovery.

Joyce: *Ulysses*.

On New Year's night 1577 the singing children of St. Paul's Cathedral, under the direction of Master Sebastian Westcott, acted a play for Queen Elizabeth and her court, named in the accounts of the royal Office of the Revels "The History of Error".<sup>1</sup> Nothing is known about the plot of this drama, but a number of experts on the Tudor theater have guessed from its odd title that it was an early version—if not the protoplast—of Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*. The limping doggerel of the Comedy's least modern lines would have been quite fashionable on the London stages in the days of the lost "History". In those days, also, the royal court favored plays with materials taken from ancient Greek romance, stories of shipwreck and piracy, of lovers tragically separated and miraculously reunited, and children vanished and found again. Shakespeare's fondness for these old Greek stories can be felt in the latest as well as the earliest of his dramatic works. So if the legend of Aegeon and his family formed the plot of "The History of Error", then it might be possible to determine, with a surprising abundance of biographic details, how the *Comedy of Errors* came to be written. Thus we may discover how Shakespeare came to be a dramatist, and the way his mind was working when he entered this sphere of art.

Just as in a dream we find recollection of events and

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\*A sequel to "Shakespeare's Early Errors", *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, xxvi (April 1955) 114-133.

perplexities which the dreamer had experienced the day before, so in the drama we find remembrance of excitements, irritations and comforts which the dramatist had experienced in the days or the months prior to his hours of production. On the assumption that the original of Shakespeare's *Errors* was composed not long before it was selected for the New Year's night entertainment at Hampton Court, we may confidently go hunting for the factors of its creation in the records of the year 1576. I believe that we will find what we are looking for in the adventures at this time of the poet Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford (1550-1604). The misfortunes and errors of the Earl seem to illuminate practically all the dark passages in the comedy, including a few that psychoanalysis laboring alone would be mystified by.

A.

At the beginning of the play Aegeon confronts Duke Solinus, in whose voice, according to our interpretation, resounds the wrath of governmental authority in general and a hint of Queen Elizabeth in particular. He sternly explains to the old merchant the fate to which the law of Ephesus condemns him for daring to come into the city. The Duke burns with indignation telling about the outrages committed by the Duke of Syracuse, Aegeon's home town, toward the merchants of Ephesus—

Our well-dealing countrymen,  
Who, wanting guilders to redeem their lives,  
Have seal'd his rigorous statutes with their blood.

Solinus blames the atrocities done by Syracuse for the "enmity and discord" which have sprung "of late" between his metropolis and the Sicilian city.

The expression "of late" requires our consideration as a potential testimony of the chronology of this play. Is there anything in the history of 1576 that corresponds to this quarrel between the two towns? There is: and the speech of the Duke indicates it plainly by the use of the word "guilders". In assigning the silver money of the Netherlands for



legal tender in his make-believe Ephesus, the writer of *Errors* took dramatic advantage of a political dispute that broke out between England and Holand in the spring of 1576. The dramatist also gave utterance thereby to a private rancor toward the Dutch. Edward de Vere had strong reasons for denouncing Dutch greed and brutality. He was personally involved in the quarrel of the two countries. Contemporary documents present his role in a fairly clear light, and there is little of the comic in it.

On April 10, 1576, after a tour of fifteen months on the continent, De Vere started out from Paris for the short voyage home. He may have rested at Calais on the 12th in order to celebrate his twenty-sixth birthday. Soon after embarking for Dover he crossed the path of three ships of warlike equipment out of the Dutch port of Flushing; they gave his vessel chase and grappled to rob it. The pirates were recognized as men in the service of William the Prince of Orange who were fighters for the liberty of the Low Countries from Spain. This was not the first time they had dared to lay their ruffian hands on English wealth at sea. It was only the first occasion on which they robbed an earl.

When Oxford's father-in-law, William Cecil, Lord Burghley, the Treasurer of England, heard of the crime he did his best to have the Earl's property restored and the thieves hanged. The Queen's Privy Council sent the Prince of Orange a letter of sharp protest. "I find it hard," Burghley declared, "to make a good distinction between anger and judgment for Lord Oxford's misuseage, and especially when I look into the universal barbarism of the Prince's force of Flushingers, who are only a rabble of common pirates, or worse, who make no difference whom they outrage."<sup>2</sup> He thanked the Council for their action on Oxford's behalf, "in whose person surely her Majesty and the realm has taken disgrace." On May 31 Orange wrote to the Lord Treasurer regretting the injuries to his son-in-law and informing him that several of the mariners accused had already been put in jail: "and if they are found guilty . . . will see how unpleasing such actions are to the States," the govern-

ment of the Netherlands. According to a reliable English observer, only one pirate, named Cantillon, was imprisoned, and he obtained his freedom without any ado of jurisprudence.<sup>3</sup> The Dutch judges were in no humor to hurt their fellow patriots' feelings by gratifying the desire for revenge of a nobleman so unfriendly to their cause as De Vere.

We can glimpse the intensity of the poet's hatred of the revolutionary Hollanders in one adjective with which Duke Solinus in *Errors* brands the people of Syracuse. He declaims to Aegon of

the mortal and intestine jars  
"Twixt thy *seditious* countrymen and us.

After listening to his tirade against the bloody Duke of Syracuse, one might think that he would have regarded sedition in the Sicilian city with a tolerant or even sympathetic eye.

In the midsummer of 1576 a couple of Dutch residents in the Earl of Oxford's native shire of Essex became particularly loud in contempt for him and his politics, and their eloquence reached the royal Council's ears. On August 21 the Council instructed some magistrates of Essex to investigate. Among the justices called upon was Henry Golding, who belonged to the family of De Vere's mother and had served his father, Earl John. The offending Dutchmen, Walter De Fourde and Basirie Linghoer, were ordered jailed in Colchester "for having spoken lewd words of the Earl of Oxford." They were released the following February, after stating that they were sorry for the "lewd words." They alleged that they had mistaken Oxford for the Earl of Westmoreland, a Roman Catholic rebel against Elizabeth who had fled to Belgium six years before.<sup>4</sup>

In the summer of 1574 De Vere himself had run away from home to Flanders, in the hope of seeing the war in the Low Countries from the Spanish camp. It was rumored that he intended to join the fugitive Earl of Westmoreland and conspire with him for the overthrow of Protestant power in England. The furious Elizabeth despatched a friend of the

Earl, Thomas Bedingfield, to bring the runaway back. She knew how long and ardently he had pleaded for his father-in-law's consent to his desire for traveling through Europe and for learning the art of war from its masters on the battlefields there. Neither she nor her chief minister ever took seriously the young man's ambition for a military or naval career. They allowed free scope and occupation for his talents in nothing but dances, masquerades, wit-combats, and the games of chivalry. When he returned from his fortnight's escapade in Belgium—"showing in himself a mixture of contrary affections"—it needed a good deal of persuasion by Burghley and his deserted daughter, the Countess Anne, together with Oxford's stalwart friend at Court, the Earl of Sussex, to gain her Majesty's forgiveness.<sup>5</sup>

Long after his homecoming he regaled a group of drinking companions with fantastic lies about his warlike adventures in Flanders. He claimed that the Spanish governor, the Duke of Alva, grew so deeply convinced of his genius in arms that he elected him lieutenant general over the whole army of Spain in the Netherlands. In a few days he had dazzled all eye-witnesses with his feats of bravery and the comprehension of siege-craft he had demonstrated against the Dutch. "And so valiantly he behaved himself as he gained great love of all the soldiers."<sup>6</sup>

In view of this fiction we can understand how the author of *Errors* was inspired to change the protagonist he took from Plautus, making Antipholus of Ephesus a soldier instead of a merchant. When Antipholus appeals to Solinus for justice against his wife he reminds the Duke:

I bestrid thee in the wars and took  
Deep scars to save thy life.

Another reminder of the war in the Low Countries occurs in Act II, Scene 2, where Dromio of Syracuse indulges in some word-sport on the Dutch term *sconce*, meaning fort.

Thus the bloody controversy between the imaginary Syracuse and Ephesus turns out to be a fulfilment of Edward de Vere's wish for conflict between London and Flush-

ing. In a manner characteristic of dream-work the poet reversed the geography of the two cities. He transformed the continental seaport Flushing into the island town of Syracuse and magically moved the English capital in the place of continental Ephesus. Another strange reversal appears in his reference to the Duke of Syracuse's "rigorous statutes." Obviously the governor of the metamorphosed Flushing was not modelled in the image of the good-humored and broad-minded Prince of Orange, but after his enemy, the Duke of Alva, who tortured and massacred Protestants and heavily taxed and restricted the Catholic merchants in his provinces.

When Shakespeare pictured the Sicilian duke as a tyrant he was well aware that antagonists of Lord Burghley's power in England sometimes called the kingdom *regnum Cecilianae*.<sup>7</sup> Young Oxford had known his Lordship as a guardian for nine years before he became Cecil's son-in-law, and he always inclined to behave rebelliously toward the elder statesman. He held Burghley mainly to blame for the defeat of his aspirations in the state. So he would naturally be attracted to puns pertaining to the island of Sicily that offered disguise for hostile feelings toward the politics of the house of Cecil.

I would like to suggest, incidentally, that Shakespeare took the name Solinus from the historian Julius Solinus, whose "Excellent and Pleasant Work. . . Containing the noble actions of human creatures, the secrets and providence of nature, the description of countries, the manners of the people: with many marvelous things and strange antiquities, serving for the benefit and recreation of all sorts of persons," was translated out of Latin by Arthur Golding, the Earl of Oxford's uncle. This book would have drawn the poetic Earl irresistibly. Arthur Golding had observed his nephew's fondness for such literature when he was a boy at Cambridge University. In 1564 Golding dedicated to the fourteen-year-old De Vere a translation of *The Histories of Trogius Pompeius* in which he said: "It is not unknown to others, and I have had experience thereof myself, how earnest a desire your honour hath naturally graffed in you to read, peruse, and communicate with others as well the histories of ancient

times, and things done long ago, as also of the present estate of things in our days, and that not without a certain pregnancy of wit and ripeness of understanding." The literary passions of the little Earl stayed with him the rest of his life.

## B

Elizabeth granted the unhappy Oxford a license to go abroad—without his wife—in January 1575. "She ascertained," said Giovanni Morosini in a letter from Paris to the Signory of Venice, "that he had resolved to depart under any circumstances."<sup>8</sup>

Before he left London his Countess told him she thought she was with child. He answered, William Cecil affirmed over a year later, "he was glad." The news had no effect on the speed of his preparations for sailing to the mainland. He acted indeed as if the lady's pregnancy did not concern him. Dr. Richard Masters, the Court physician, reported in a letter to Burghley of March 7, 1575 that the Queen had heard the gallant Earl state openly, "in the presence chamber of her Majesty," that if Countess Anne was with child, it was not his. Her Majesty inquired from Dr. Masters "how the young lady did bear the matter." His reply was: "She kept it secret four or five days from all persons, and that her face was much fallen and thin with little colour, and that when she was comforted and counselled to be gladsome and so rejoice, she would cry: 'Alas, alas, how should I rejoice seeing he that should rejoice with me is not here; and to say truth (I) stand in doubt whether he pass upon me and it or not.' And bemoaning her case would lament that after so long sickness of body she should enter a new grief and sorrow of mind."<sup>9</sup> After three years of married life with the erratic Edward the poor girl (she was just nineteen years old) could not feel certain that he would approve of her maternity. She unburdened her heart to her father and he—no doubt vexed by Dr. Masters' disclosure—tried to ascertain his son-in-law's true sentiments. He urged the Earl to come home.

In response to Cecil's plea the wayward husband replied

from Paris, on March 17: "My Lord, Your letters have made me a glad man, for these last have put me in assurance of that good fortune which you formerly mentioned doubtfully. I thank God therefore, with your Lordship, that it hath pleased Him to make me a father where your Lordship is a grandfather. And if it be a boy I shall likewise be the partaker with you in a greater contentation. But," he went on obdurately, "thereby to take an occasion to return, I am off from that opinion." He offered a curious rationalization for his longing to continue his travels despite his wife's longing for him. "For now it hath pleased God to give me a son of my own (as I hope it is) methinks I have the better occasion to travel, sith whatsoever becometh of me, I leave behind me one to supply my duty and service, either to my Prince or else my country." He boasted that the King of France had given him letters of recommendation to the Sultan at Constantinople, where he fancied that he might spend two or three months. Morosini, the Venetian ambassador in Paris, "knowing my desire to see those parts, hath given me his letters to the Duke and divers of his kinsmen in Venice." In addition he looked forward to visiting some part of Greece. The goal of his heart, however, seems to have been the Italian city whose divinity many unlearned Englishmen still believed to be Venus.

He thanked Burghley for sending him bills of credit and regretted that he still lacked enough for his expenses. Creditors in England persisted in annoying him, though he had assigned revenue from his estates to appease them. "If I cannot yet pay them as I would," he wrote, "yet as I can I will, but preferring my own necessity before theirs."<sup>10</sup> He purchased luxuries and distributed largesse like a prodigal prince.

Oxford had his portrait painted by a Flemish artist (perhaps Lucas van Heere) and mailed it to his wife, "with kind letters and messages," but Cecil did not preserve these. She also received from Paris a gift of two horses for her coach.

In May the Earl arrived in Italy. The scholar William Lewin, who had accompanied him from London to Stras-



burg, informed Burghley on July 4 that he was no longer acquainted with Oxford's moves and plans. He could not tell whether his Lordship had started for Greece or tarried in Italy. This may have been the season when the English artillery master Edward Webb witnessed the Earl of Oxford's heroic behavior in Palermo, Sicily, where De Vere proclaimed his readiness to fight a tournament with any gentleman of Italy and unfortunately found none to welcome his challenge.<sup>11</sup>

On July 2, 1575 the Countess of Oxford gave birth to a daughter, named after Queen Elizabeth. Her husband did not get the news of his fatherhood until September 24. He was then a resident of Venice, but not so gay as he had expected to be. While inspecting a Venetian galley he hurt his knee. Also, he "found himself somewhat altered by reason of the extreme heats," and became dangerously weak from fever. He wrote his father-in-law that he was glad he had seen Italy but—"I care not ever to see it any more." Nevertheless he wanted the Queen to renew his touring license for another summer, his excuse being that sickness had deprived him of "a great deal of travel, which grieves me most seeing my time not sufficient for my desire. . . I doubt not her Majesty will not deny me so small a favour." For the lonely Anne his sole allusion in this letter is in a phrase, "thanking your Lordship for your good news of my wife's delivery."<sup>12</sup> We can imagine his disappointment on learning that she had not borne a man-child.

### C

De Vere visited other Italian cities and came back to Venice in December to enjoy the Carnival. By the middle of the next month he was on his way to France; the Queen declined to let him wander for another year. His letters to London in the meantime appear to be mostly chronicles of his troubles over money. He insisted that Burghley sell his lands in order to silence his creditors and make his tour more comfortable. Oxford knew how the idea of selling his inherited estates saddened the Lord Treasurer and increased



his anxiety about Anne and the baby Elizabeth. However, "I have no help but of mine own," the Earl declared, "and mine is made to serve me and myself, not mine."

This declaration was made in a letter from Siena (dated January 3, 1576) which conveyed a sharp warning to Cecil not to interfere with his journeying—"unless you would have it thus: *ut nulla sit inter nos amicitia*." The threat of concluding their friendship apparently sprang from Oxford's despair of winning promotion in the service of the Queen and his country. But why should he have brooded over this frustration in the midst of the delights of Italy? "For every step of mine," he complained, "a block is found to be laid in my way." The bitterness of these words must be traced to a profounder cause than politics, since the young man had no grounds for thinking that if he returned promptly to England like a faithful husband and father and went quietly to work at Court he would not eventually win a post of glory in the government, worthy of his ancestry and ability. Implicit in his complaint about the Treasurer's failure to speed his political advancement was the wish to be free of responsibility to his father-in-law, free from the bonds of matrimony. Burghley seems to have sensed this. Among his papers of the period is a set of notes concerning the Earl's opinion that the infant Elizabeth was not his, and these notes are mysteriously dated January 3, 1576. Internal evidence leads us to deny the date. It may be explained as an unconscious error written in memory of the defiance from Siena.

When Cecil reviewed the Earl's relations with him and his daughter, in some notes of April, 1576 he had forgotten the defiance. His son-in-law, the minister wrote, "never signified any misliking of anything until the 4th of April at Paris, from whence he wrote somewhat that by reason of a man of his, his receiver, he had conceived some unkindness, but he prayed me to let pass the same, for it did grow by the doubleness of servants." The uneasy statesman sent a messenger to Paris in March to hasten Oxford homeward.<sup>13</sup>

Soon after the Earl landed at Dover he was greeted

by his Catholic cousin, Lord Henry Howard, a learned and clever nobleman who had recently been rescued by Elizabeth from her inquisitors. They suspected him of plotting for the prisoner Queen Mary of Scotland. Lord Henry made a pastime of furnishing information to Burghley which could make the old man ill, telling him scandalous things that his son-in-law had said in the exclusive circle of his cups. For example, Burghley noted that Oxford had "confessed to my Lord Howard that he lay not with his wife but at Hampton Court (in October 1574), and that then the child could not be his, because the child was born in July, which was not the space of twelve months."<sup>14</sup> The wise minister wrote no comment on this absurdity. He had long ago learnt to anticipate marvels of logic from De Vere. He commanded his son Thomas to ride down from his country estate, over a hundred miles to the north, in order to meet the Earl at Dover and estimate his temper and mood. Sir Thomas reached the port less than two hours after Howard and some others, and saw his brother-in-law close in comradeship with one Rowland York, who had crossed the Channel with him. York was a youthful soldier of fortune: he appears to have fought for the Papacy under the flag of the Earl of Westmoreland and also served Calvinism in the army of the Prince of Orange. He and Howard were certainly major instruments in the secret conversion of Oxford to the Roman faith, which happened about this time. They encouraged him to break with the Cecils and separate from his wife. Sir Thomas Cecil observed no sign of the Earl's cruel intention toward his sister: he "did not understand from him any point of misliking."

The anxious Anne wished to speed to Gravesend to greet her husband on the Thames river. Her father advised her to wait until brother Thomas "should understand her contentation, but she thought long to do for my son's answer," said the miserable Burghley, "and looked that my Lord would be come near before she could have word." In a letter to the Queen of April 23, 1576 he described the Countess's eagerness: "upon expectation of his coming so filled

with joy thereof, so desirous to see the time of his arrival approach, as in my judgment no young lover rooted or sotted in love of any person could more excessively show the same, with all comeliest tokens." Burghley sent two messengers one after the other to entreat his son-in-law to take Cecil House for his lodging, but the Earl made no reply. Thomas Cecil reported that "he found him disposed to keep himself secretly two or three days in his own lodging." Yet Edward York, Rowland's brother, told young Cecil in confidence that his Lordship would come first to the home of the Cecils; "but he would nobody know thereof. Whereupon," says the elder Cecil, "I was very glad, but his wife gladder." They were deceived. Instead of going to the house of his in-laws, Oxford suddenly left his Thames barge and alone with Rowland York went to stay at York House.

His father-in-law sent a message of welcome and invited him to come for a visit. He answered that "he meant to keep himself secret there in his lodging two or three days," and then he would have a talk with the Treasurer. His wife sent a servant to announce, "if he should not come that night to her father's house, that then she would come to him, for she desired to be one of the first that might see him. To it he answered neither yea nor nay, but said, 'Why! I have answered you.' " Hearing this Burghley decided that she should not go to him "until we might see how others were suffered to come to him, or he to resort to others." They heard that the Earl's sister, Lady Mary Vere, had gone to greet him, and other relatives and friends. Lord Harry Howard promised to keep Cecil informed of Oxford's actions but the rest of that unforgettable April 20th passed without further news.<sup>15</sup>

De Vere paid his respects to her Majesty but would not consent to his wife's coming to Court. Her father protested, in a lengthy and pathetic epistle to the Queen already quoted. He absolutely refused to admit that Oxford's accusations against him and Anne made any sense: "I have not in his absence on my part omitted any occasion to do him good for himself and his causes; no, I have not in thought imagined

anything offensive to him, but contrariwise I have been as diligent for his causes to his benefit as I have been for my own, and this I pronounce of knowledge for myself." Concerning the Countess, he affirmed, "I did never see in her behaviour in word or deed, nor ever could perceive by any other means, but that she hath always used herself honestly, chastely, and lovingly towards him."<sup>16</sup>

The distressed father confided to his diary that Oxford was "enticed by certain lewd persons to be a stranger to his wife." He mentioned no names and noted no details, but we know that courtiers talked about the Earl as if he had been crowned with the horns of cuckoldry, and he did not spurn this insult to his wife. On April 27 the secretive husband communicated with his father-in-law as follows:

"My Lord, Although I have forborne in some respects, which should (be) private to myself, either to write or come unto your Lordship, yet had I determined, as opportunity should have served me, to have accomplished the same in compass of a few days. But now, urged thereto by your letters, to satisfy you the sooner, I must let your Lordship understand this much: that is, until I can better satisfy or advertise myself of some mislikes, I am not determined, as touching my wife, to accompany her. What they are—because some are not to be spoken of or written upon as imperfections—I will not deal withal. Some that otherwise discontented me, I will not blaze or publish until it please me. And last of all, I mean not to weary my life any more with such troubles and molestations as I have endured; nor will I, to please your Lordship, only discontent myself."

He expressed agreement with Cecil's proposal to let Anne live with her parents—"for there, as your daughter or her mother's, more than my wife, you may take comfort of her; and I, rid of the cumber thereby, shall remain well eased of many griefs." He wished that this could have been done through private conference and not been made "the fable of the world." He wished the most silent handling of her disgrace. And he wished that Burghley should not bother him any further about her.

On April 29 Oxford despatched another letter known only through his father-in-law's summary of its charges. De Vere listed several of the "mislikes" and "molestations" which had prompted him to divorce his wife without benefit of clergy or the law. First he accused her father of not delivering him money according to his directions. Next he charged that Burghley had treated his followers with severity—and shown one of his letters to the Queen "of set purpose to bring him into her Majesty's indignation." Moreover, Lady Mildred, the Treasurer's wife, had always been De Vere's antagonist and "ever drawn his wife's love from him." In fact "she hath wished him dead"—for reasons never recorded nor surmised. At his country house of Wivenhoe, on the coast of Essex, his mother-in-law "caused a division," he said, by starting a slander that he intended to murder some of his men. Lady Oxford had been "taken away from him at Wivenhoe and carried to London." Finally the Earl announced that "he means not to discover anything of the cause of his misliking" of Anne; "but he will not come to her until he understand further of it."<sup>17</sup> Later the Treasurer copied down more specific accusations of his neglect of Oxford's financial and household interests, and took pains to refute each one.

It cannot be denied that deep antipathy existed between De Vere and his wife's parents. The statesman's avowal that he had never imagined anything offensive to the young poet who had cost him so much irritation and woe can be accepted only as evidence of Cecil's strength in repressing his harsh thoughts. He simply could not do his best to gain his capricious son-in-law important offices of state, particularly when a royal darling like the Earl of Leicester and other aggressive politicians were hungry for the jobs. Cecil did petition the Queen for work suitable to the proud youth: he asked her to appoint him her cavalry commander, Master of the Horse. But her Majesty had no curiosity to see what artistic temperament might achieve in the strategic places of her government. As the courtier Gilbert Talbot observed, De Vere's own "fickle head" was the chief impediment to

his progress.<sup>18</sup> We can well understand how a woman of Lady Mildred Cecil's austerity and frigid stiffness would have wished for that head's quietus.

None of Oxford's explanations of his conduct will account for the cruelty to his wife and disregard of his infant daughter. Clearly he was unable to confess, or else did not know, the true motives of the divorce. He yearned to believe evil of Anne. He considered himself a forlorn sinner. While permitting ugly rumors and calumnies to circulate about her, he bragged to his Roman Catholic friends of his sexual prowess in Tuscany. "The Countess of Mirandola," he vowed, "came fifty miles to be with him for love." He also told them that the French princess Marguerite de Valois "sent a messenger to desire him to speak with her in her chamber."<sup>19</sup> Whether fact or fantasy, these anecdotes disclose a yearning for erotic liberty among the motives that brought the Earl to Latin Europe. He would have attempted to satisfy this yearning at any price. Perhaps his coming to Venice for the Carnival was an effort to achieve the adultery of his dreams. Beyond question, he failed. Then disgust and remorse threatened to consume his mind ("I care not ever to see it any more") and he fled for salvation to the bosom of the Roman Church, the church of his mother. In turning against the Protestant creed of his education, the faith of his father, he unconsciously renewed spiritual bonds with his mother, the Countess Margery, who after the death of Earl John had married the stanch Catholic Charles Tyrrell, a man well known to his Calvinist neighbors for his devotion to the queen they called Bloody Mary. Earl Edward, brooding over his new creed, nursed the conviction that in wedding Anne Cecil, the offspring of heretics, he had done worse than blunder. He felt as if he had violated a sanctuary and blasphemed against the Holy Ghost. (That is why the hero of the comedy of *Errors*, in flight from the pagan termagant Adriana ends on the breast of his mother in a medieval priory.) Yet he had not a single rational pretext for sundering his ties with Countess Anne. So he hid himself guiltily from her.



## D

We have reached the point in the life of Edward de Vere where, according to our interpretation of Shakespeare's *Errors*, the moment of ripeness would have come for the creation of the play.

Behind the hilarity and subdued horror of the drama we detected "a tempestuous period which culminated in the wreck of Shakespeare's family." His hero, Antipholus of Ephesus, is twenty-five years of age (by the reckoning of Aegeon in Acts I and V) when the farce crisis in his own marriage takes place. At precisely the same age the Earl of Oxford blithely insulted his wife and went for a pleasure trip in Europe, hardly expecting to return to her.

*During an absence from home, in a strange city, he had violated his marriage oath: he entertained a stranger as a lover. He did it in absolute ignorance of the real lusts that impelled him. The woman of the adventure had unconsciously reminded him of the dark and marvelous stranger who had been his mother. After the adventure he felt that he had committed a loathsome sin. He thought it was adultery. It was imaginary incest: in a kind of dream he had ascended to his father's place by his mother's breast.*

Our view of the characters Aegeon and Aemilia led us to the conjecture that Shakespeare, when he wrote the Comedy, conceived of his parents as ghosts. Oxford's own father died in August 1562. There is little to connect Earl John with Aegeon except the similar sound of their names, since the Greek merchant is barely more than a figure of extreme old age, without touches of individuality. The person of the Abbess Aemilia shines more lucidly, but she is simply a phantom of ideal motherhood. Shakespeare portrays her as a loving and protecting mother, who had suffered in separation from her children a second birth travail. We have good reason to think that the dramatist's mother did not live up to his ideal. After the funeral of his father, she transferred the twelve-year-old Earl to the care of the state. He became a royal ward, under the guardianship of William Cecil. In April 1563 Countess Margery wrote a letter to Cecil with



the purpose of casting off her shoulders the burden of her boy's heritage of debt. She stated that his late father had kept "most secret" from her the sources and distribution of his wealth. Now that Earl John was dead she wished to be exempt from the cares of his estate. "I had rather leave up the doings thereof to my son," she wrote. Let "my son, who is under your charge," have all "the honour or gain (if any there be)" from the father's last will and testament.<sup>20</sup> There is not a breath of affection or concern for the lad in her letter. No document indicates that they ever met again. She lived with her second husband in the home of the first at Castle Hedingham until she died in December 1568. Edward was then eighteen. At the same age Antipholus of Syracuse suddenly went in search of his lost mother. The poet betrays a frosty and hostile attitude to his mother in the last lines spoken by Aegeon. They are spoken to Aemilia and, as we have remarked, bear no sign of love nor friendliness. He is pallidly conscientious, almost accusing, requiring her to tell the fate of the son she carried with her in the stormy hour of their parting. This duty done, he is mute.

Death had divided Aemilia and her husband once before the fatal storm off Epidamnum, when she was pregnant with the twins. The merchant's factor in that city had died, and Aegeon had to voyage there leaving his wife for six months. At the end of this time she crossed the sea to join him and then gave birth. The number is significant. We recall that Earl Edward's own child was born six months after he sailed in quest of somebody to love in the place of his own dead "factor" or maker.

Aemilia was named, I think, after Emilia Pia, the champion of femininity in Baldassare Castiglione's classic book on Renaissance nobility, *The Courtier* (1528). It is possible that Shakespeare chose the name for his Abbess because of its likeness to the Latin for a female rival — *aemula*. His mother was in truth the supreme competitor in his heart of every woman he looked at with warm interest. For her sake he regarded any lady who attracted him as a seducer tempt-

ing him to chaos and loss. To each his soul responded with the question his Syracusan "genius" asks Luciana (III, 2):

Against my soul's pure truth why labour you  
To make it wander in an unknown field?

Antipholus of course likes few things better than such truan-  
cy, little minding its effect on his soul's verity.

In Aegeon's reference to his wife's anxiety "for the latter born" of their twins (I, 1) there may be a hint of the sibling jealousy that the little Viscount Edward de Vere experienced toward his sister Mary (just one year older). Aegeon's words appear to reflect a wish that the dramatist's mother had been "more careful" for him than for her other child. The old man tenderly speaks of the child he rescued as "my youngest boy and eldest care."

Stronger than brotherly jealousy in the Comedy is the expression of sibling love. Antipholus of Syracuse is willing to embrace Luciana as a sister: "Call thyself sister, sweet, for I aim thee" (III, 2). Dramatically the girl serves as the virgin double or obverse of the sour Adriana. Thus she may stand for the spirit of Anne Cecil before she became the Countess of Oxofrd. From a biographic point of view she will pass superbly as a picture of Lady Mary Vere. The Earl's sister had a reputation for plain sense and a tongue like a scourge. Yet her sturdy vivacity proved able to inspire an enduring love. Her pity for Countess Anne and the baby Elizabeth spurred her to take a hand in schemes for reconciling her brother to the woman he abhorred. It is easy to fancy the shrewd Mary lecturing Edward and her sister-in-law, just like Luciana, on the obligations of wedlock. Anne's own sister Elizabeth, afterward Lady Wentworth, played no visible role in the life of De Vere.

The Comedy's merciless treatment of Adriana corresponds to the cruelty of Oxford to his Anna. The husband of the former defames her with a rage of unreason identical with the anger of the Earl:

Dissembling harlot! thou art false in all;  
And art confederate with a damned pack  
To make a loathsome abject scorn of me. (IV, 4)

This confederacy about which Antipholus of Ephesus raves turns out to be the Cecil circle. We are acquainted with Oxford's charge "That his wife was most directed by her father and mother."<sup>12</sup> Indeed Lady Anne had not the heart to employ her womanly weapons to wrest advantages for her mate from the Lord Treasurer. Instinctively she took the side of the Cecils, the Cooks and Bacons (her mother's kin), and other wealthy relatives of plebeian stock who had climbed to power with the Tudor dynasty in their conflicts with the ancient patrician clans, of which her husband was a fiery scion. She must often have gossipt and wept to her folks and their puritan intimates about his Lordship's eccentric ways and his comradeship with rimers, playwrights, actors, idle soldiers and sailors, and other fellows of ill fame. To stop such gossip he tried to make her give up one of her solitary pleasures, conversation with the puritan Lady Elizabeth Drury. He proposed no substitutes. He never took his wife into his confidence.

One of his comrades, by the way, was the poet George Gascoigne, a veteran of the Dutch war who had campaigned with Sir Humphrey Gilbert and Rowland York. When Gascoigne came back from the Low Countries in 1574 he produced a poem, "Dulce Bellum Inexpertis," in which he mentioned De Vere as a youth who promised to be a fine warrior: "Young Oxenford, as toward as the best." Now in April 1576 Gascoigne contributed a preface to Gilbert's *Discourse of a Discovery for a New Passage to Cataia*. This pamphlet came out in support of Captain Martin Frobisher's expedition in search of a northwest sea-way to the riches of China. The financiers of the voyage anticipated a vast profit in gold. Michael Lock, the mariner and capitalist, and Dr. John Dee, the renowned physician, astrologer and alchemist, both backed Frobisher. The Earl of Oxford had long been familiar with Dee's ideas, and he became interested in the dream of the northwest path to Cathay. Harassed by his creditors, he was easily lured into projects for quick riches. He invested large sums in Frobisher's later efforts to discover the passage. On Thursday, June 7, 1576 the Captain, with

two barks and a pinnace, set sail from Gravesend for his first attempt. An allusion to this event, which may decisively date the *Comedy of Errors*, has been seen in the remark of Dromio of Syracuse: "The bark Expedition put forth to-night" (IV, 3). This remark by itself means nothing. It becomes proof of chronology when joined with the likelihood that Shakespeare derived the name of Angelo, the goldsmith in *Errors*, from the goldsmith Agnello who was employed to assay the ore which Frobisher meant to bring home. In harmony with this chronology is the statement (IV, 1) that Angelo has to pay a sum of guilders due "since Pentecost." By my calendar reckoning, Easter in 1576 fell on Tuesday, April 23 (William Shakespeare's birthday) and Pentecost on June 9, two days after Captain Frobisher began his voyage China-bound.

To finish this digression about Oxford's companions, let me say that Balthasar, the friend of Antipholus, is not distinguished enough dramatically for us to identify him in history; but I believe that the poet named him after Baldassare Castiglione, author of *The Courtier*. One of Oxford's tutors at Cambridge University, Bartholomew Clark, translated Castiglione into Latin, and the Earl wrote a rapturous introduction to the work in 1572. This Latin epistle—"more polished even than the writings of Castiglione himself"—was extolled years later by the collegian Gabriel Harvey as a witness of De Vere's excellence in literature.<sup>22</sup> It shows how eagerly the Earl studied the art, how earnestly he applied himself to its "delightful industry." What his wife or her parents thought of his endeavors in literature, we cannot tell. The latter probably viewed them as trivialities at best.

In the *Errors* the lonesome Adriana is made the mouth-piece of accusations which were really hurled at Oxford by his foes. She cries out that her Antipholus is deformed and crooked—"Stigmatical in making, worse in mind" (IV, 2). The words could have come straight from the pen of Lord Henry Howard in 1581, when he strove to set down a record of De Vere's vices, defects, and alleged crimes, in the hope of destroying him. Howard exhausted his arsenal of rhetoric

on the former friend, "the botches and deformities of his misshapen life."<sup>23</sup> So far as we know, there was only one feature that, in the eyes of esthetes, might have marred the Earl's good looks. His short stature was not admirable. We have the testimony of another adversary that he had more than the ordinary man's share of beauty. In 1585 Thomas Vavasor sent him a challenge to a duel, beginning "If thy body had been as deformed as thy mind is dishonourable, my house had been yet unspotted. . ."<sup>24</sup> Oxford's vanity certainly surpassed in many ways the self-admiration of all the rest of Queen Elizabeth's nobles and knights. If he had really been blemished in face or shape, would he have dared to write, as he did in the preface to Clarke's *Castiglione*, that men could not become courtiers who exhibit "some notable defect, some ridiculous trait, or some deformity of appearance"? Nevertheless, he did leave critics with the impression that he was not upright in frame. And it seems he was always haunted by a menace of physical distortion. He lived to see his graceful body deformed.\* Perhaps the injury to his knee in Venice foreshadowed that event, both misfortunes serving as unconscious penalties for his lusts.

In the spring of 1576 De Vere was apparently not so much troubled by the possibility of blemish or loss in his anatomy as he was by the conviction that he had lost the jewel of his soul—honor. A disgrace of his family had become the "fable of the world." This was his own explanation for the melancholy that dominates his poems published this year in the anthology *The Paradise of Dainty Devices*. The first of these, displaying more sincerity than artistic merit, is entitled "His good name being blemished, he bewaileth." It proclaims the writer ("E. O.") a man whose spirits, heart, wit and force "in deep distress are drown'd," because of an undefined infamy that had stript him of pride.

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\*See "The Confessions of William Shakespeare," *AMERICAN IMAGO*, x (Summer 1953) 121, 134.





On the assumption that they were composed seven years later, I can offer historical explanations of all three, the funeral reference and its two companion questions. This assumption is justifiable by the fact that Shakespeare gives us two different numbers for the age of his twin protagonists, one (25) according to the reckoning of Aegeon, and the other—33—according to the count of mother Aemilia. The first, by our theory, marks the age of the author when he left his wife and travelled in blind search of amorous adventure. Let us glance at what happened to him in his thirty-third year which could have recalled the *Errors* of 1576.

In the spring of 1583 Lord Burghley described his son-in-law as "ruined and in adversity . . . all crosses are laid against him, and by untruths sought to be kept in disgrace." De Vere was then suffering the consequences, in ill fame and physique, of the most violent love affair of his life. The breach with his Countess had at last been repaired but her tears continued to flow, now more woefully than ever. For after their first and only son died on May 7, two days old, her husband's thoughts forever harked back to the unlawful love. He strove to renew it. And in June his very dear friend, Thomas Radcliff, Earl of Sussex, who had heartily backed his ambitions at Court, died. Sussex was buried not far from De Vere's ancestral home and birthplace, Castle Hedingham, a short distance from the tomb of Oxford's ancestors. Earl Edward was residing at the Castle this season, for the last time. In September he sold his family's ancient estate of Earl's Colne, together with its priory, where ten of the Earls of Oxford and their wives were buried. The dramatist, in my belief, remembered this priory and its graves when he erected in poetry the priory of his Mother Aemilia. In 1583 our Earl was badly in need of money. He sold this year no less than five of his lands, and yet never did he wrestle more hopelessly with debt. He invested heavily in Martin Frobisher's final project for a western sea-way to the Orient. Captain Edward Fenton returned from the attempt in May 1583 with gloomy news. Spaniards had attacked his three vessels, one of which Oxford himself had



bought, and they sank his flagship. Here, more truly than in 1576, the poet could mourn that he had "lost much wealth by wrack at sea." At the same time England's dealings with the Netherlands must have reminded him of his encounter with the Flushing corsairs. Queen Elizabeth became furious on account of the Dutchmen who maintained commerce with Spain while begging for English money and troops to sustain their war of emancipation. She ordered the capture of Holland ships found trading with the enemy empire.<sup>25</sup> Oxford of course approved her assault on Dutch greed. What better time could there be for a revival of the comedy of *Errors*?

While mourning for Sussex the dramatist would have remembered his old friend's years of political feuding with Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. On the deathbed Radcliff is said to have warned the gentlemen in his room: "Beware of the Gypsy; you know not the beast so well as I do."<sup>26</sup> The word "beast" in this connection inevitably conjures up the sign of the bear on Leicester's coat of arms. This may be the reason why Shakespeare chose that animal as an emblem of horror in the *Comedy of Errors*, when he made Dromio of Syracuse say that he flies from the kitchen girl Nell "As from a bear a man would run for life" (III, 2).

### E

The years 1576 and 1583 are both important in English theatrical history. Early in 1576 James Burbage, one of Leicester's company of actors, opened in Shoreditch the first English house devoted to plays, the Theatre. Soon afterward the Curtain playhouse went up nearby. In the autumn Richard Farrant, Master of Windsor Chapel, began producing plays in his grand room at Blackfriars. The singing boys of Windsor and the Royal Chapel performed here to crowds smaller but more prosperous and refined than those who went to watch grown men act in the sky-exposed Theatre and Curtain and their competitors of the innyards. In the spring of 1583, by royal command, Edmund Tylney, the Master of the Queen's Revels, selected twelve of the best

men on London's stages to form a troop for her Majesty. At least one of these stars, John Dutton, came from a company patronized by Edward de Vere. Three months later the Earl of Oxford purchased the lease of a little theater in the former priory of Blackfriars and placed his secretary John Lyly in charge of the plays given there. The troop that Lyly directed seems to have comprised children from the choirs of the Queen's Chapel and St. Paul's Cathedral; they were known as "Oxford's Boys." The *History of Error* was conceivably revived for the new company of St. Paul boys, and altered in concord with the poet's experiments with blank verse.

Sebastian Westcott, who directed the singing lads of St. Paul's Cathedral in 1576, would have been happy to produce any play that the Earl of Oxford sent him. Westcott too was a secret Catholic. And the Earl's good friend Sussex, among his court functions as Chamberlain of the Queen's Household, had the task of approving the plays which were acted for her pleasure in the Christmas holidays. Sussex enjoyed a strong personal interest in the theater and reviewed all the dramas that were submitted for the privilege of performance at Court.

Incidentally, it seems to me that the description of Adam, the officer of the debtors' prison in Shakespeare's *Ephesus* (IV, 2)—"A back-friend, a shoulder-clapper," a fellow who "carries poor souls to hell"—is a palpable hit at a comedian named John Adams, who had been the star of Sussex's own company in 1576. Adams endeared himself to Elizabethan audiences by his practice of carrying fellow actors on his back and prancing off the stage while they pummelled him. Decades after, a player in Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* recalled him: "And Adams the rogue, ha' leap'd and caper'd upon him, and ha' dealt his vermin about, as though they had cost him nothing." Experts have supposed that he acted the part of the clown Adam in *A Looking Glass for London* by Robert Greene and Thomas Lodge, which was produced by the Queen's men around 1587. The Devil in this play invites Adam to get upon his back, and the clown cudgels him off the stage. When Shakespeare

named the prison-keeper in *Errors* Adam, he probably meant to permit some buffoonery of shoulder-slapping in the scene where the officer comes to arrest Antipholus and Angelo.

One comedian of the *Errors* baffles all endeavors to identify him: Doctor Pinch, the conjurer, who is so grotesquely tortured at the close of the play. Shakespeare styles him a schoolmaster but he gives no proof of such occupation in the comedy. Instead he is portrayed as "a mountebank, a threadbare juggler, and a fortune-teller," pretending to be also a healer of souls possessed by devils. The portrait sounds like something the dramatist would have seen in a harlequinade in Italy.

The sadistic fantasy of Pinch's fall into the hands of Antipholus of Ephesus indicates what their creator secretly wished he could do to his powerful father-in-law. He dared not follow the *Menaechmi* of Plautus to the extent of giving his hero's wife a father and making that old man a target for wild buffoonery. No matter how much he ached to write it, he could not imitate the scene of the Latin playwright in which the unmarried Menaechmus acts insane to free himself from the jealous wife and her father. This scene surely struck Oxford as a ludicrous picture of his own predicament and savage desire. Menaechmus shouts:

"I am beset upon the left by this rabid bitch-woman, and behind her is that stinking goat who ruins innocent citizens with perjury. . . . Lo! Apollo from his oracle bids me burn her eyes out with flaming torches!" (Antipholus of Ephesus also burns to pluck out his Adriana's eyes.)

Menaechmus cries out crazily that the god wants him to take the staff of his wife's father (Burghley as the Queen's Treasurer carried a special staff that stands out in his best known portraits) and with this weapon to knock the "bearded, tremulous Titan" to pieces. Menaechmus goes through the motions of goading imaginary chariot horses into trampling down the "toothless lion." Suddenly he drops in a mock-fit and the father hurries off to find a physician for him. Then the "madman" makes his escape.

Dr. Pinch in *Errors* takes the places of both father-in-law

and physician, and receives a treatment more brutal than any Plautus ever inflicted on his characters. This sort of poetic justice is precisely what might have been expected from the author of Anne de Vere's "unjust divorce." In struggling to justify the ways of his Lordship to man, the dramatist felt driven to be violently unfair to his wife. He executed a comic reversal of their roles. He made her guilty—through ignorance—of refusal to welcome him home. Fancying himself in the position of Plautus's Amphitryon, locked out of his house while his wife makes love to a stranger inside, he lacked the nerve to present his Adriana in the position of the heroine Alcmena, brave though lonesome, longing for her absent man, and pregnant with a child who is destined to reconcile the frantic husband to her.

The *Comedy of Errors* was composed more in anger than in sorrow, and its art suffered in proportion to the artist's craving for vengeance. He wished to act, not reflect. His mood is mirrored in some verses which may have been written by the Earl of Oxford during his marital crisis in 1576:

What plague is greater than the grief of mind?  
The grief of mind that eats in every vein;  
In every vein, that leaves such clots behind;  
Such clots behind as breed such bitter pain;  
So bitter pain that none shall ever find  
What plague is greater than the grief of mind.

In form, by the way, this stanza imitates the Greek palilogia, which appears in parody in the *Comedy of Errors* (I, 2)—

She is so hot because the meat is cold;  
The meat is cold because you come not home;  
You come not home because you have no stomach;  
You have no stomach, having broke your fast;  
But we, that know what 'tis to fast and pray,  
Are penitent for your default today.

I have no doubt that the dramatist had a proud answer ready for the critics of the technique in his first play. Surely he would have quoted the defense made by the Roman Terence in *The Woman from Andros*, his first comedy, when he spurned the critics who blamed him for mixing two plays by

the Greek Menander together, just as Shakespeare mixed two plays by Plautus to concoct his *Errors*. Terence declared that "He wishes rather to rival" Plautus and poets of his kind, with their "fine carelessness, than the obscure and petty pedantry of his detractors." The young aristocrat Shakespeare actually disdained the playwrights who worried over technique and dramatic workmanship, just as he looked down on all creatures busy with handicraft.

Most likely De Vere was spending his days at taverns and theaters in the months of May and June 1576, when his father-in-law recorded that he not only rejected the company of his wife but stayed away from the Court too, "in respect to avoid his offense." Queen Elizabeth expressed no judgment on the scandal. Her people knew her low opinion of the holy bonds of matrimony, and the peculiar refreshment she got from the spectacle of her courtiers' marriage troubles. Oxford had no cause to fear the royal wrath for his return to bachelor life. One of the public houses where he tried to forget that he was not a bachelor could have been the Porpentine on the Thames Bankside. It stood near the Pike Garden close to whorehouses and theatres. The mistress of the Porpentine plays an elfish role in the *Comedy of Errors* as a temptress of the unhappy husband Antipholus.<sup>27</sup>

On June 12 the Queen's chief minister appealed to the Earl to give Lady Anne permission to come into his presence at Court and "to do her duty to her Majesty, if her Majesty shall therewith be content." Cecil demanded that the Countess be allowed to answer her husband's insinuations before any judges Elizabeth might be pleased to appoint. Oxford did not see fit to respond. Then the Lord Treasurer let the Queen see how miserable the whole affair made him, and she decided to intervene, to persuade De Vere to act politely toward his wife. On July 10 Burghley tried again, hopeful that "my Lord of Oxford doth now understand that the conception which he had gathered to think unkindness in me toward him was grounded upon untrue reports of others, as I have manifestly proved them." Cecil went on to affirm that whoever would not listen to a "trial of the falsehood"

must be thought "furtherers of untruths, and unworthy for my poor goodwill or friendship." Along with this warning he reminded Oxford that he had sent two thousand pounds of his own to help pay the Earl's expenses on the continent.<sup>28</sup> This time De Vere broke his silence; he arranged an interview with the Treasurer on July 12.

At their meeting he admitted that her Majesty had often talked to him for Anne's sake, requesting that she be allowed to come to Court. He promised to allow her, if Burghley would agree—"that she should not come when I was present, nor at any time have speech with me." Moreover, her father must not "urge further in her cause." The great politician apparently thanked Oxford for his generosity and went away without stating what he thought of his son-in-law's conditions.

The next morning the Earl (from a lodging at Charing Cross not his home) despatched a letter to the Treasurer repeating his terms. "I understand," he wrote, "that your Lordship means this day to bring her to the Court, and that you mean afterward to prosecute the cause with further hope. Now if your Lordship shall do so, then shall you take more in hand than I have, or can promise you. For always I have, and I will still, prefer mine own content before others." He asked Cecil not to take advantage of the promise he had made until he gave his word to respect the conditions. Not until these were observed, said the Earl, "I could yield, as it is my duty, to her Majesty's request, and I will bear with your fatherly desire towards her"—the forlorn Countess. "Otherwise all that is done can stand to no effect."<sup>29</sup>

So the noble orphan pursued his errors and his discoveries.

"For always I have, and I will still, prefer mine own content before others." . . . "I have no help but of mine own, and mine is made to serve me and myself, not mine."

Some readers may comment on this: How sinister, or how sad. Others: The audacity, the absurdity of it. Apart from the outlooks of morality and art, a psychoanalyst may point out that rarely has the faith of the gifted and spoiled

child in his divine right to be first in nurture and first in love been so straightforwardly declared.

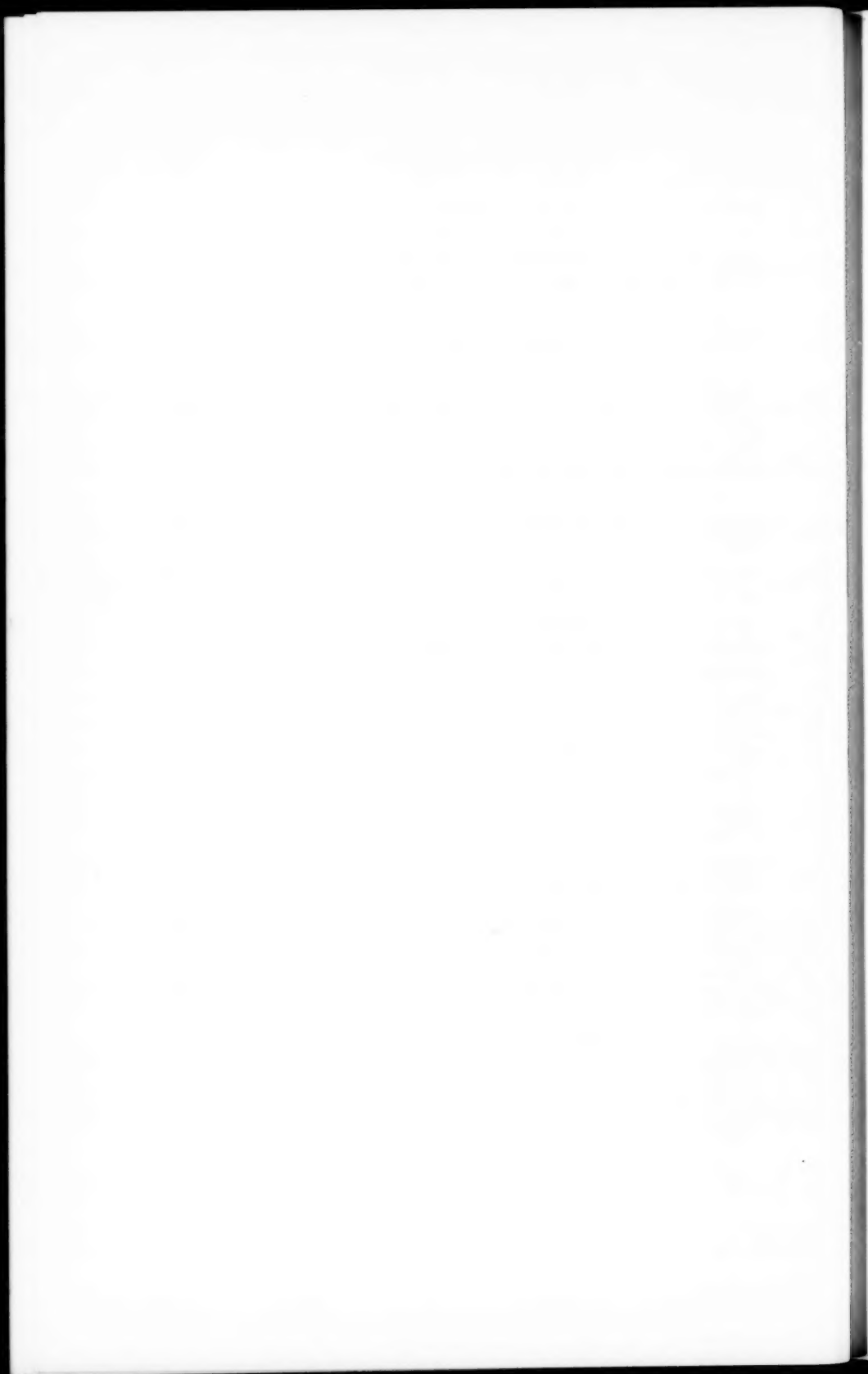
I have surmised that our dramatist completed the first version, the protoplast of his *Errors* in June 1576. No doubt he had already resolved on its production by the company of the choir-boys at St. Paul's Cathedral whose theatrical endeavors were conducted by his friend, the clandestine Catholic, Sebastian Westcott. The Earl may have brought the play to Westcott in person or else delivered it by the hand of a secretary, and afterward given his judgment that the piece deserved to be played. After its first performance and stage success, the Queen's Chamberlain, Sussex, who was in charge of the royal theatricals known as the Revels, and the heartiest friend the Earl of Oxford had at court, was persuaded that the farce would be worthy of the eyes of her Majesty during the Christmas revels, and so it came to be acted in the palace at Hampton on January 1, 1577. Like nearly all the plays of the period, it went without an author's name, and nobody seems to have missed it. The dramatist revised it in June 1583 under the spell of blank verse, and probably altered the comedy again before its most famous performance on the night of December 28, 1594, when the law students of Gray's Inn staged it with riotous results. Not until the year 1623, when the writer's dramatic works were first collected for the press, did the *Comedy of Errors* emerge from anonymity. This was its earliest appearance in print. It emerged under the *nom de plume* of William Shakespeare. No man of that name ever claimed it in his lifetime.

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## Notes

- 1 Documents Relating to the Office of the Revels in the Time of Queen Elizabeth, ed. Feuillerat (Louvain, 1908) 256.
- 2 Calendar of State Papers Foreign: Elizabeth, 1576, no. 735.
- 3 Ibid., no. 799. Ibid., 1577, no. 202.
- 4 Acts of the Privy Council, ed. Dasent, ix, 192, 292.
- 5 State Papers Domestic: Elizabeth, 1574, xeviii, 2. Ibid., Addenda, xxiii, 62. Harleian Ms. 6991, 50.
- 6 State Papers Domestic: Elizabeth, cli, 45.
- 7 Ibid. clxxxi, 42. J. A. Froude, History of England (London, 1870) xii, 132n.
- 8 Calendar of State Papers Venetian, 1575, vii, 527.
- 9 Lansdowne Ms. 19, 83.
- 10 Cecil Ms. at Hatfield (Calendar of Salisbury Papers) ii, 129.
- 11 State Papers Domestic, 1575, no. 209. Edward Webbe His Trauailles, ed. Arber (London, 1866) 32.
- 12 Cecil Ms. ii, 114.
- 13 Ibid. ii, 83, 131.
- 14 Ibid. xiii, 144.
- 15 Concerning Rowland York, see Feldman, "Othello in Reality," AMERICAN IMAGO, 11 (Summer 1954) 151f.—Cecil Ms. ii, 131. Lansdowne Ms. 102, 2.
- 16 Lansdowne Ms. 102, 2.
- 17 Cecil Ms. ii, 132; xiii, 128.
- 18 Edmund Lodge, Illustrations of British History (London, 1791) ii, 100. Cecil Ms. ii, 171.
- 19 State Papers Domestic: Elizabeth, cli, 46.
- 20 B. M. Ward, The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford (London, 1928) 21-22.
- 21 Cecil Ms. ii, 128, 133.
- 22 Ward, op. cit. 83.
- 23 Calendar of State Papers Domestic, 1581, cxlvii, 41.
- 24 Ward, op. cit. 229.
- 25 Sir Harris Nicolas, Memoirs of the Life and Times of Sir Christopher Hatton (London, 1847) 321. Conyers Read, Mr. Secretary Walsingham (Oxford, 1925) ii, 111.
- 26 Sir Robert Naunton, Fragmenta Regalia, ed. Arber (London, 1870) 30.
- 27 Eleanore Boswell, in the *London Times Literary Supplement*, 13 Nov. 1930.
- 28 Cecil Ms. ii, 170-1; i, 474.
- 29 Ibid. ii, 135.



## Dr. Jones's Freudian Slip

by

John Henry Raleigh.

The writer has found, he thinks, an appropriately Freudian slip in the third volume of Dr. Jones's great biography of Freud, along with several other mistakes, on someone's part, that cluster around this slip.

On page 224 of Volume III Dr. Jones says, apropos the year 1938, when the Nazis had entered Vienna and efforts were being made to get Freud out of Vienna to England:

He and Anna completed the translation of Marie Bonaparte's book, *Topsy*, which Anna had begun some eighteen months before; it was finished on April 9. Freud entered fully into the spirit of the book—a fondness for chows was one of the many links between him and the author—and liked it greatly. Then Anna Freud translated a book called *The Unconscious* by Israel Berlin, and Freud himself translated the chapter on Samuel Butler. This was the first work of the kind Freud had done since his translations of Charcot and Bernheim so long ago.

But in *The Origins of Psycho-Analysis* (Freud-Fleiss letters) it is said in a footnote (p. 17, n. 7), apropos those same translations of Charcot and Bernheim:

These were not Freud's only translations. In his student days he translated a volume of J. S. Mill (see page 343, footnote 2). In later life, in 1922, he translated the chapter on Samuel Butler in the German edition, edited by Anna Freud, of Israel Levine's *The Unconscious* (Levine 1926); and finally, in his old age, when he was waiting for a permit to leave Vienna after the Nazi occupation of Austria, he translated Marie Bonaparte's little book [*Topsy*], jointly with Anna Freud.

The discrepancies are obvious: Marie Bonaparte, Anna Freud, and Ernst Kris, who edited the Freud-Fleiss correspondence, say that Anna Freud "edited" the German edition of Israel "Levine's" *The Unconscious* in "1922" and that Freud himself translated the chapter on Samuel Butler;

and "in his old age," he translated, with Anna, Marie Bonaparte's *Topsy*.

Dr. Jones says that Anna Freud "translated" *The Unconscious* by Israel "Berlin," with Freud translating the chapter on Samuel Butler, in 1938 just *after* they had jointly translated Marie Bonaparte's *Topsy*.\*

Now one hates to cavil—and I am not so doing—with so magnificent a biography as Dr. Jones has constructed, with its firm control over a vast multitude of facts and complex theories and its clear, sure exposition. Never was a great man more fortunate in his biographer than was Freud. But factual discrepancies should always be straightened out, especially in biographies.

The facts, so far as I can ascertain, are: Israel Levine's *The Unconscious* was published in England in 1923, which makes it impossible for the Freuds to have been working on the German edition in 1922, a fact which points out an error in Anna Freud's account (unless she had access to the manuscript). Similarly, there are other discrepancies (if we take Anna Freud to be responsible for the information in the notes of the Freud-Fleiss correspondence). For there it is said that she "edited" Levine's book and the publisher and date is designated, curiously, as "(Levine, 1926)." But the official German bibliographical account of the book says that she "translated" the book and that the publisher was, of course, the Viennese psychoanalysts' own publishing firm, what Jones refers to, for brevity's sake, as "Verlag." The full bibliographical reference to Levine's book in its German edition is as follows (*italics mine*): "Levine, Israel. *Das Unbewusste. Übers aus d. Engl. v. Anna Freud. Wien, Internat. Psychoanalyt. Verlag, 1926.*" From all this it is clear that sometime between 1923 and 1926 Anna Freud translated the book and that it was published by "Verlag."

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\*Neither in University Card Catalogue nor the resources and staff of the Reference Room of the University of California Library has revealed a bibliographical reference to the book even in the original. But I trust it exists.

But the "slip" is the most interesting part of it all. I think both Jones and Freud would have enjoyed it immensely, and, of course, it is appropriate that at the very end of his monumental work—for it occurs in the last chapter relating to Freud's life, entitled "London—The End"—the biographer himself should have left, unconsciously, an exemplary reminder of one of the Master's theories. For somehow "Isaiah Berlin," the name of a well-known contemporary English scholar, must have arisen out of Dr. Jones's unconscious and become woven into "Israel Levine." Also, of course, there are several references to "Berlin," Germany, all derogatory — it was the place where Freud's books were burned—in this final volume. But I leave it to professional analysts to untangle the mysteries of the "slip," and will stop at the amateur boundaries of having only pointed it out. I hope that in future editions of the biography a footnote will be added to straighten out the factual discrepancies but that the "slip" itself will be left in the text, as a memorial to Freud and to Jones, the Darwin and the Huxley of the twentieth century.

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